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Works of the late reverend
William Romaine

WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND

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SAINT DUNSTAN, IN THE WEST,

LONDON.

In Eight Volumes.

VOL III.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR CROSBY AND LETTERMAN,

STATIONERS'-COURT, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1801.

TWELVE

DISCOURSES

UPON THE

LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

PREACHED AT

ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH, IN THE WEST,

London.

DISCOURSE I.

The Law was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.
John i. 17.

Entered at Stationers Hall.

PREFACE.

MANY are the miſtakes at preſent about religious matters; but none are more deſtructive than thoſe which concern the law and the goſpel. The generality of our people confound them, and put one in the place of the other. Some ſuppoſe they are to be accepted of God for their works, and that they can be juſtified by the law in the ſight of God. Others make their keeping of the law the condition of their receiving the bleſſings of the goſpel, as if theſe were to be the purchaſe and reward of their partial obedience. Some are perſuaded they muſt do all they can, and keep the law with all their might, and wherein they come ſhort of the perfect

demands of the law, Chriſt will, out of his merits, atone for their failings. And others again think that Chriſt has abated the rigour of the law, and that the goſpel is nothing more than a new law diſpenſation, in which the Lord has been pleaſed to declare that he will accept of ſincere obedience inſtead of perfect. Theſe and many more ſuch like miſtakes prevail in our times, and they are exceedingly dangerous, tending to the utter ruin both of body and ſoul. In the following diſcourſes I have endeavoured to diſtinguiſh, and preciſely to ſettle the difference between the law and the goſpel. Some of the principles upon which I have proceeded are theſe:

1. The Lord God, the Almighty Creator of all things viſible and inviſible, has an unalienable right to make laws for the government of his creatures. This right is founded in his abſolute dominion and ſovereignty over them. They are his property, the work of his hands. He hath created and made them, and not they themſelves. Their life, and all things

belonging to it are his, coming from his gift, and continued by his bounty; and therefore he has a moſt indiſputable claim to their obedience. What he requires they muſt perform: Becauſe they are his creatures. The relation between the Creator and his creatures puts them under a neceſſity of obeying his law and will, or elſe of ſuffering whatever he ſhall threaten to inflict upon their diſobedience.

2. The law of the Lord God the almighty Creator is unalterable. It changeth not: For it is the copy of God's moſt holy mind and will, in which there can be no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning. If the mind and will of God were to change, then God would be a changeable being, and whatever is changeable is imperfect; but God is perfect, therefore his mind and will change not. His word will he not break, nor alter the law that is gone out of his mouth. His infinite wiſdom, and his almighty power, ſtand engaged to maintain its dignity, that it may be always an holy,

juſt, and good law, which he will not break or alter.

3. The moral law, which the Lord God revealed to Adam in Paradiſe, required of him perfect uninterrupted obedience. The whole moral law is ſummed up in one word, namely, love; love to God for the bleſſings of creation and providence, and love to man for God's ſake. This love was the indiſpenſable homage due to the Creator. It could not be alienated from him, and given to any other object without idolatry: For which reaſon the moral law is unalterable. If a man withdraw his love in the leaſt from God, he breaks that law which poſitively enjoins him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his ſoul, with all his mind, and with all his ſtrength.

4. The law given to Adam being unalterable, all his deſcendants are bound to keep it: For they are all under the law, as God's creatures. His will is the indiſpenſable rule of their obedience. He requires their love, and if they refuſe t

give

give it him, then their will is oppoſite to his, which is rebellion againſt their ſovereign Lord, and which muſt bring upon them ſwift deſtruction.

5. All mankind have ſinned and broken the moral law. The authority of God's word is poſitive and expreſs. "We have "before proved, ſays the apoſtle, both "Jews and Gentiles, that they are all "under ſin, as it is written, there is "none righteous, no not one. There is "none that underſtandeth, there is none "that ſeeketh after God. They are all "gone out of the way, they are altoge-"ther become unprofitable, there is none "that doeth good, no not one." Rom. iii. 9, 10, &c. And after the apoſtle has proved theſe truths from various arguments, he ſums up the evidence thus, "Now we know, that what things ſoever "the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are "under the law; that every mouth may "be ſtopped, and that all the world may "become guilty before God: Therefore "by the deeds of the law, there ſhall no "fleſh be juſtified in his ſight." Rom. iii. 19, 20. It is evident from theſe authori-

ties,

ties, that all have ſinned, and are tranſgreſſors of the law.

6. The law has made no proviſion for the pardon of the leaſt tranſgreſſion. It requires perfect unſinning obedience in thought, word, and deed. This is its juſt demand. And in caſe of the leaſt failing, it immediately paſſes ſentence and condemns. It will not accept of ſorrow or tears, of repentance or amendment, as any ſatisfaction; but its language is, "Do "this, or thou ſhalt die." There is not a word ſaid about ſorrowing for what was paſt, and reforming for the future, as if the ſtyle of the law was, "Be ſorry "for thy ſin, and reform, and then thou "ſhalt not die:" But it is poſitive and expreſs, "Keep the law, and thou ſhalt "live. Tranſgreſs it, and thou ſhalt "die: for curſed is every one, who "continueth not in all things, that are "written in the book of the law to do "them."

7. From thoſe premiſes it follows, that the law being unalterable, and all men having

having broken it, and there being no provision made in the law for the pardon of the leaſt tranſgreſſion, but a puniſhment threatened to the leaſt, they are therefore guilty before God. The law brings them in guilty, and condemns them, and divine juſtice is bound to inflict the deſerved pains and penalties; ſo that there can be no poſſibility of juſtifying them by the law. By the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified: for the law is expreſsly called by the apoſtle, the miniſtration of condemnation, and the miniſtration of death.

8. Since the law is thus unalterable, and puniſhment is threatened to the leaſt breach of it, and ſince all men have broken it, and all the world is guilty before God, and condemned by the law to death and hell, and without ſtrength to do any thing for their deliverance, it follows that there can be no ſalvation by the law.

From theſe particulars we may be able to ſtate the true nature of the moral law. It is the revealed will of God diſcovering

to

to his creatures what obedience he requires of them, namely, perfect unſinning obedience, an abſolute conformity to the law in thought, word, and deed. It is an unalterable law, founded on God's unalterable will, and therefore it requires this perfect obedience of all men, and at all times. It has made no proviſion for partial obedience, or for ſincere obedience, but inſiſts upon man's continuing to do all things that are written in the book of the law, if he hope by the deeds of the law to be juſtified and ſaved.

If this be the true ſtate of the caſe, how widely do theſe men miſtake the nature and demands of the moral law, who expect to be made righteous before God, by their partial obedience. The law knows nothing of any righteouſneſs, but what is perfect. If you put your trial at God's bar upon this iſſue, that you have kept the law in moſt inſtances, having failed only in ſome few; this is pleading guilty. It is owning your tranſgreſſion, and confeſſing that you have not

not ſuch a righteouſneſs, as the law demands: For a part is not the whole. And the law inſiſts upon the whole, and in caſe of failure, paſſes ſentence, and condemns you: For it is written, "Curſed "is every one, who continueth not in all "things, &c."

But ſome may aſk, Will not the law accept of ſincere obedience? Nay. It will abate nothing of its demands. It will have abſolutely perfect obedience, if by the works of it a man be juſtified before God. There is not one word in the law about ſincerity; no, not a ſingle hint, as if a man might be pardoned, who kept the law ſincerely, although imperfectly. The law ſays—Do all things which God has commanded, and continue to do them with all thy heart, mind, ſoul, and ſtrength, and then thou ſhalt be juſtified by thy works; but if thou offend in one inſtance, thou comeſt under the curſe: For he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all, and conſequently ſincere obedience failing in one point, leaves a man

guilty, and under the curſes of the broken law.

It highly concerns thoſe perſons to conſider this matter well, who fancy that Chriſt came as a great lawgiver, to publiſh milder terms of acceptance than the moral law had required. They have a notion of Chriſt, as if he were only the publiſher of ſome new remedial law, which abated ſomething of the demands, and mitigated ſome of the rigour of the moral law. Whereas he came not to publiſh any new law, but to ſave his people from their ſins comitted againſt the old law. He came to be a Saviour, and not a lawgiver. Indeed he preached the law, but it was to bring men to the knowledge of ſin, and to ſee and to feel their want of his ſalvation. But he preached nothing new. He only enforced the law in its ſpiritual nature, and in its full extent, ſhewing the length and breadth, the depth and height of the commandment. He would not have his people ſo much as entertain a thought

of

of his coming to make a change in the moral law. "Think not, ſays he, that "I am come to deſtroy the law, I am "not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil it:" And he did fulfil it; for he was born under the law, and was obedient to it even unto death. The law was unalterable. It could not change, unleſs God's moſt holy mind and will could change, which is impoſſible, and therefore the law being broken could not remit the deſerved puniſhment, unleſs ſome infinitely perfect obedience ſhould be paid, and ſome infinitely meritorious ſufferings ſhould be undergone in the ſinner's ſtead, by which the law might be magnified and made honourable. And the Lord Chriſt undertook to do this. He vouchſafed to obey and to ſuffer for his people, to obey the precepts, and to ſuffer the pains and penalties of the law. The law had indicted them, and found them guilty of diſobedience. Chriſt came to obey for them, as it is written, "By the obedience "of one ſhall many be made righteous." The law had put them under the curſe,

and

and he came to redeem them from the curſe of the law. The law threatened to puniſh them, and he came to bear their ſins, and the puniſhment due to them in his own body upon the tree. So that Chriſt came not to publiſh a new remedial law, but to glorify the moral law, and to demonſtrate the unchangeable nature of it, ſince no obedience, and no ſufferings, but his, which were abſolutely perfect, divine, and infinite, could work out ſuch a righteouſneſs for any one ſinner, as the law required, in order to his being juſtified in the ſight of God.

As theſe arguments ſhew that the ſinner cannot of himſelf attain the perfect righteouſneſs which the law demands, ſo do they prove that he cannot by any means in his own power eſcape the puniſhment which the law threatens. The law requires unſinning obedience, and enforces it upon thoſe ſanctions, Do this, and thou ſhalt live: In the day that thou tranſgreſſeſt, dying thou ſhalt ſurely die. Theſe ſanctions of the law are as much the mind and will of God, as the rule of the law itſelf.

itſelf. And his will is unalterable, conſequently upon tranſgreſſion the ſanction took place, and the tranſgreſſor became ſubject to the firſt, and to the ſecond death, which juſtice was bound to ſee inflicted upon him. What could he do in this caſe to deliver himſelf? Could he offer any thing, to divine juſtice to ſave himſelf from receiving the wages of ſin? No. They are his due, and he muſt receive them. Say, he is ſorry for his ſin, and weeps and mourns bitterly. What does this avail? This is only an open confeſſion of his guilt, and an acknowledgment that he deſerves puniſhment. Suppoſe he amends and reforms his life. What atonement is this for his former bad life? The law will not be ſatisfied with ſuch partial obedience. But he promiſes never to ſin for the future: If he could keep his promiſe, it would not ſatisfy the law, for what becomes of his paſt diſobedience? One ſingle ſin cuts him off for ever from being ſaved by the law; and ſince all have ſinned, conſequently

quently by the works of the broken law can no man living be juſtified.

This is the true ſtate of all men by nature. They are all ſinners, and they cannot be ſaved by the moral law. It can neither altogether, nor in part juſtify them, and therefore it ſhuts them up under guilt, and leaves them without remedy, and without hope. As ſoon as man was fallen into this ſtate, it pleaſed God to reveal that rich plan of grace and mercy, which is contained in the goſpel, of which this is a ſhort ſketch.

1. The goſpel is ſalvation from the law. It brings glad tidings for poor convinced ſinners, diſcovering to them how their ſins may be pardoned, and they may be redeemed from the curſes of the broken law. It reveals to them what Chriſt has done and ſuffered to ſatisfy the law, and how he endured the pains and penalties of it, dying the death, to which the law had ſentenced them. And the goſpel calls upon them to receive the benefit of what he did and ſuffered as his free gift,

propoſing

propoſing to them, without money and without price, all the graces and bleſſings which the Saviour purchaſed with his life and death.

2. The goſpel ſets forth to the convinced ſinner ſalvation from guilt and puniſhment, by giving him freely as perfect a righteouſneſs as the law demands. It invites him to receive the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, againſt which the utmoſt rigour of the law can make no objection: Becauſe it is the righteouſneſs of God, a divine, infinite and abſolutely perfect righteouſneſs. When this righteouſneſs is imputed to the ſinner, he is pardoned, the law ceaſes to accuſe, conſcience no longer condemns, he has peace with God, and the love of God reigns in his heart.

3. In order to receive this righteouſneſs the goſpel requires no previous qualification. The ſinner is not regarded, as fit and meet to receive Chriſt's righteouſneſs by any thing he himſelf can do. Chriſt freely wrought it out, and he freely gives it. The works of the law have no merit

to

to purchaſe it: For it is written, "We "are juſtified freely by his grace, through "the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus." And if it be by grace, then it cannot be by any works or qualifications.

4. But how is Chriſt's righteouſneſs received, and the ſinner made righteous by it at God's bar? By faith, and not by works: "For to him that worketh not, "but believeth on him that juſtifieth "the ungodly, his faith is counted for "righteouſneſs. Where is boaſting then? "It is excluded. By what law? of "works? Nay, but by the law of faith. "Therefore we conclude, that a man is "juſtified by faith without the deeds of "the law."

5. With reſpect then to the ſinner's acceptance and juſtification before God, the law and the goſpel ought to be diſtinguiſhed in theſe as well as in other reſpects.

According to the law ſalvation is by works, according to the goſpel it is by grace.

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The law ſays, Do this; but the goſpel ſays, Believe this, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.

The law threatens to puniſh the ſinner for the firſt offence, but the goſpel offers him pardon for many offences.

The law leaves him under guilt and condemnation, the goſpel invites him to receive pardon and ſalvation.

The law ſentences him to death, the goſpel offers him juſtification to life.

By the law he is a guilty ſinner, by the goſpel he may be made a glorious ſaint.

If he die under the guilt of the broken law, hell will be his everlaſting portion; if he die a partaker of the grace of the goſpel, heaven will be his eternal inheritance.

6. But if the law and the goſpel are diſtinct in theſe and ſeveral other reſpects, ſome perſons may think the law is totally repealed by the goſpel: for they cannot ſee wherefore ſerveth the law, unleſs it be to juſtify a ſinner. The law is un-

alterable. It cannot change any more than God can change. To this day it ſtands in full force, and not one tittle of it is repealed. It is ſtill the revelation of God's moſt holy mind and will, concerning the obedience which he requires of his creatures. And if they diſobey, the law immediately paſſes ſentence and condemns them to death. While they continue careleſs and ſecure in ſin, they conſider not the law as the miniſtration of death and condemnation; and none of them ſee it in this light, until the holy Spirit awaken them. It is by his preaching of the law to their conſciences, that they are alarmed with fearful apprehenſions of their guilt, and of their danger. He brings them to ſee the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſinning againſt the holy, juſt, and good law of God, and convinces them that the broken law can never make them legally righteous. This puts them upon ſeeking ſuch a righteouſneſs as the law requires, and diſpoſes them to receive gladly the righteouſneſs of the

Lord

Lord Chriſt: For he is now the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.

7. Thus the Holy Spirit convinces ſinners that the law is not repealed by the goſpel, and when he gives them the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith, and they have juſtification to life freely by grace, does he teach them to make void the law by faith? God forbid. Yea, they eſtabliſh the law: For they conſent unto it that it is good. They delight in the law of God after the inward man, and they keep it in their outward life and converſation. It is the rule of their holy walking. They are free from the law as to its condemning killing power, but they are under the law to Chriſt. They know, that if the law had not been unalterable, and of indiſpenſable obligation, Chriſt had lived and died in vain. And he did not come to give his people liberty to break the unalterable law; that would be a contradiction in terms. But he came to eſtabliſh the law, by reſtoring it to its honour

and dignity, by his obedience to its precepts, and by his ſuffering its pains and penalties, and then by making it honourable in the confeſſion of convinced ſinners, and in the lives of his redeemed people.

Theſe are ſome of the principal points treated of in the following diſcourſes. In which I have endeavoured to follow ſcripture cloſely. This has been my guide; and I have conſtantly deſired his teaching who inſpired it. And I now pray him to ſhine into the heart of every one who reads theſe diſcourſes. May he always accompany the peruſal of them with his divine grace and bleſſing; and if they be made uſeful to the church of Chriſt, may his be all the glory. Give it him, reader; for it is his due, and pray for thy hearty well-wiſher,

W. R.

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firſt of all the commandments is, Hear, O Iſrael, *the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: This is the firſt commandment. And the ſecond is like, namely, this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf; there is none other commandment greater than theſe.*

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THE

THE

NECESSITY

OF

DIVINE TEACHING.

DISCOURSE I.

THE

NECESSITY

OF

DIVINE TEACHING.

DISCOURSE I.

JOHN vi. 45.

It is written in the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God.

THIS is a ſweet promiſe, full of comfort to the children of God. So ſoon as he has given them a deſire to be taught, the Lord has ſpoken it by the mouth of his holy prophets, that they may come to him to receive inſtruction. He, the all-wiſe God, will be their teacher. He will open the eyes of their underſtanding clearly to diſcern ſpiritual things, and will make them wiſe unto ſalvation. In the book of Pſalms we find frequent prayers for this divine teaching, and among the high and honourable titles of God, this is uſed to deſcribe his goodneſs to the children of men---" He that teacheth man knowledge:" and

and not man conſidered merely as ignorant, but alſo as guilty. "Good and upright is the "Lord, therefore will he teach ſinners in the "way," Pſalm xxv. 8; which ſhews the wonderful condeſcenſion of our divine teacher. He vouchſafes to be the inſtructor of ſinners, in order to bring them out of darkneſs into light, and out of miſery into happineſs: "For bleſſed is "the man," ſays the Pſalmiſt (xciv 82), "whom "thou teacheſt out of thy law." He is bleſſed, becauſe he is taught of God, and taught by him out of the law, to know his guilt and miſery; and taught alſo to know the remedy provided for both. Bleſſed ſurely is he, whom God thus teaches; and yet how few among us ſeek this bleſſedneſs? Even among thoſe who profeſs their belief of it, its importance is not ſufficiently valued. The privilege is great, ineſtimably great, but they are too apt to neglect it; while others proudly fancy they can teach themſelves; or they think it no honour to be taught of God; they diſbelieve the reality, or they neglect the importance of divine teaching. Some of theſe reaſons prevail with the generality of nominal Chriſtians, and hinder them from being convinced of the truth of what is written in the prophets, "And "they ſhall be all taught of God." But he that teacheth man knowledge can, and glory be to his rich grace, he does, convince him of the neceſſity of being taught of God. He does enlighten

lighten the darkeſt, he does humble the proudeſt mind, and bring it earneſtly to pray for inſtruction—" Lord what I know not, that teach thou " me." May this be the prayer of all your hearts, while I am explaining the nature of the promiſe in the text, and may God fulfil it to you at this time, that you may be convinced

Firſt, Of the neceſſity of being taught of God:

Secondly, Of the manner in which God teaches his people:

Thirdly, Of the proper diſpoſition of mind which he gives them, in order to their receiving and profiting from his divine teaching.

First. Divine teaching conſiſts in opening the eyes of the underſtanding to perceive ſpiritual and divine objects, and to ſee their value and importance, in diſpoſing the will to chooſe them, and the heart to love them. The divine teacher is the Holy Spirit. He prepares the mind to receive his inſtruction, and then fills it with the knowledge of his will in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding. The neceſſity of his doing this is founded in the preſent ſtate and circumſtances of fallen men: for through ſin all the faculties of the ſoul were loſt, and the underſtanding, which is the eye of the ſoul, was left in the ſame condition as the bodily eyes would be if they had no light. Hence the Pſalmiſt declares, that there

is none who underſtandeth the things of God, and he repreſents God as looking down from heaven to ſee if there were any who did underſtand and ſeek after God; but he found none, no not one. They all had their underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart. The prophets give us the ſame character, and ſpeak of men as if they were all blind, and deſcribe the Meſſiah to be the ſun of righteouſneſs, the light who was to ariſe to lighten the Gentiles, and was to be the glory of his people Iſrael. Thus Jehovah ſays of his beloved Son, "I the Lord will give thee for a "covenant of the people, for a light of the Gen-"tiles, to open the blind eyes." Iſa. xliii. 7. And again—"I will alſo give for a light to the "Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation "unto the ends of the earth." Iſa. xlix. 6. How did our Lord fulfil theſe prophecies? He did not, while he was upon earth, open the bodily eye of any blind perſon among the Gentiles, but he has fulfilled them, and, glory be to his great name, he is daily fulfilling them in the gentile world, by opening the blind eyes of our underſtandings to ſee and to diſcern the things of God. In this ſenſe the Pſalmiſt, ſpeaking both of Jews and Gentiles, ſays, Pſalm cxlvi. 8. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind," that is, the Lord Chriſt: for we read, Iſa. xxxv. 4, 5,

"Say

" Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, be " ſtrong, fear not, your God will come and ſave " you, then the eyes of the blind ſhall be open- " ed: for in that day (Iſa. xxix. 18) ſhall the " deaf hear the words of the book, and the " eyes of the blind ſhall ſee out of obſcurity, and " out of darkneſs." All theſe ſcriptures had their happy accompliſhment, when God, who was to come and ſave us, ſpake with his own mouth, and ſaid, " I am come a light into the " world, that whoſoever believeth on me ſhould " not abide in darkneſs." John xii. 46.

From theſe authorities it is certain, that fallen man is in darkneſs, and cannot ſee the things of God. The eyes of his underſtanding are in the ſame condition as his bodily eyes would be without light. He cannot ſee any ſpiritual objects, and how then can he come to the knowledge of them, unleſs he be taught them of God? By what other way or means can he diſcern them? Has he any powers or faculties of his own, which can help to enlighten him? No, he has none: for, ſince the eyes of his underſtanding are in darkneſs, all his endeavours to enlighten them, without divine teaching, will be like thoſe of a blind man, who only makes his blindneſs more manifeſt the more he labours and ſtrives to give an account of thoſe objects, which he never ſaw nor felt.

But cannot the arts and ſciences enlighten his blind eyes? No. They cannot help him to diſcover one ſingle ſpiritual idea.—The arts and ſciences treat of the objects of ſenſe; to theſe they are confined, and cannot get beyond the bounds of nature: for it is a certain truth, and indeed it is at preſent a received opinion, that all our ideas come from ſenſe. We are not able to form an idea of any thing, unleſs it fall under the obſervation of ſome of our ſenſes. If any one of the ſenſes be deſtroyed, the man is not able to form an idea of any object peculiar to that ſenſe. A man born deaf has no idea of ſounds, nor a blind man of colours. Since then the arts and ſciences treat entirely of the objects of ſenſe, how can they give us any ideas of thoſe things which are not objects of ſenſe: for was it ever known that the ſtream roſe higher than the fountain head?

From hence it appears, that if the underſtanding be ever ſo greatly refined and enlarged with the knowledge of arts and ſciences, yet it ſtands in as much need of divine teaching, as the moſt ignorant peaſant does; becauſe the things of God are not diſcoverable by the arts and ſciences. Let matter of fact ſpeak to this point. Has there not been a total ignorance of divine things, whenever the light of revelation has been extinguiſhed? Look into the learned ages

of

of Greece, and you find the ſeveral ſects of philoſophers enquiring, What is the chief good of men; and none of them could diſcover what it was, and diſputing about the origin of evil, and never coming near the truth. Look into the times when Rome was raiſed to its higheſt glory, and was as famous for its learning as for its conqueſts, and you will not find one learned Roman, who can tell you what God is. Tully has written a book upon the nature of the gods, and it is one of the moſt valuable of his writings; for therein he gives us the opinions of the philoſophers upon this ſubject, and ſhews his own and their exceeding great ignorance of it. From theſe inſtances, not to mention others, it is evident that a man may have all the knowledge which arts and ſciences can give him, and yet be totally ignorant of God, and of the things of God. This has appeared from undoubted matter of fact. We know from the experience of the Greeks and Romans, that arts and ſciences never did lead them to the knowledge of any ſpiritual and divine objects; and we are aſſured from the teſtimony of God's word that they never can. Man, in his natural ſtate, blinded by ſin, and under the power of it, cannot attain to any ſuch knowledge. The Apoſtle has decided this point for us. Speaking of the politeſt claſſical age of Rome, he ſays of her great philoſophers, and celebrated authors, that they were without under-

ſtanding, that they became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened. What! was Tully without underſtanding, was the imagination of Virgil vain, and the heart of Seneca fooliſh? Yes, in the things of God: "for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the "Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto "him, neither can he know them, becauſe they "are ſpiritually diſcerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. While he remains a natural man, it is abſolutely impoſſible that he ſhould know them, "neither "*can* he know them," becauſe he has no ſpiritual diſcernment, by which alone ſpiritual objects can be diſcovered; and therefore he muſt remain for ever ignorant of them, unleſs God ſhould open the eyes of his underſtanding, and bring him out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.

This is a very humbling, but it is a real view of human nature, and I need not to have gone to diſtant ages and countries for proof. We have it near enough at home, if men's pride would but let them ſee it; but their pride ariſes chiefly from their ignorance of it, and helps to keep them ignorant. If they had but a little humility they would diſcover how imperfect their knowledge is, even of the things about them, and they would therefore ſee the neceſſity of being taught of God in theſe things, which were out of the reach of their ſenſes: ſuch are all ſpiritual and

divine things, and in theſe they want divine teaching, and the promiſe is, concerning theſe, "All thy children ſhall be taught of God." Now God never acts in vain. Unleſs his children wanted teaching, he need not be their teacher: but in what belongs to the ſpiritual world they are entirely ignorant, and they have no means of diſcovering, unleſs they be taught of God, what ſtate they are in by nature, and if it be a ſtate of guilt and miſery, how they are to be delivered from it. God has revealed in his holy word the knowledge of what belongs to theſe two ſtates; but ſin has ſo blinded men's underſtandings, and depraved their judgments, that they will not aſſent to what is revealed, nor be determined by it, until the Holy Spirit convince them what they are by nature, and what they may be by grace. Accordingly the ſcripture declares, that the Holy Spirit is the inſpirer of every good thought, and word, and work. He enlightens the children of God with ſaving truth, and ſubdues the oppoſition which was in their wills to it, and that enmity which was in their hearts. From the firſt moment he awakens them, and opens the eyes of their underſtanding; until he bring them ſafe to glory, he is their teacher. He teaches them to look upon ſin, as it is in itſelf, exceeding ſinful; he alarms the conſcience, and makes it feel the guilt and danger of ſin; he leads the humbled and convinced ſinner to Chriſt

for pardon; he gives him faith, and hope, and love; and, by grafting him, like a living branch, into the true vine, enables him to bear much fruit to the glory of God. And ſince every thing good in him comes from divine teaching, is it not abſolutely neceſſary that he ſhould be taught of God?

If you will conſider all theſe authorities together, I hope they will convince you, my brethren, that there is a neceſſity for your being taught of God: for by nature you are ignorant of all ſpiritual and divine things; and you cannot by any means in your own power, attain to the knowledge of them; the arts and ſciences can give you no aſſiſtance. It is a matter of fact that they never did, and the ſcripture declares that they never can, help any man to diſcern the things of the Spirit of God. The natural man, while he remains ſuch, be he ever ſo learned, *cannot* know them. And how then can he ever attain any ideas of them but by divine teaching? If this evidence has convinced you, you are prepared to follow me in my ſecond enquiry, which relates to the manner in which God teaches his people.

His eſtabliſhed method is by the word, and by the Spirit. In all divine teaching theſe two go together, the word, and the Spirit explaining and applying the word. The word is the whole will of God, which he revealed to be the means of bringing ſinners from darkneſs to light, from

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ſin to righteouſneſs, and from the power of ſatan unto God, and unto the kingdom of his dear Son, here in grace, and hereafter in glory. Theſe great things are ſpoken of the written word; for it is able, according to the Apoſtle, to make a man wiſe unto ſalvation: but then the quickening Spirit muſt accompany the hearing, or reading of it, or elſe you will never find in it this ſaving wiſdom. It is only a dead letter, unleſs the living Spirit animate it: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The word is the means in the hand of the Spirit of beginning, carrying on, and perfecting, the life of God in the ſoul. When the Spirit works in it, and by it, he makes it effectual, through his mighty operation, to build up and to perfect the man of God. He works in the word; for the Spirit is received in it, as the Apoſtle ſhews, 2 Cor. iii. 8, where he calls the preaching of the goſpel, "The miniſtration "of the Spirit," that by which the Spirit was adminiſtered and given, and he ſays to the Galatians, that, by this hearing of faith (which hearing was of the word of God), they received the Spirit; Gal. iii. 2. And being received, he enlightened their minds and opened their underſtandings, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures, and thereby he wrought that faith in them, which cometh by hearing: for faith is his gift. It is called, Gal. v. 22, "the fruit of the Spirit;" one of the fruits produced in the heart by his grace,

grace, upon which account he is called "the "Spirit of faith," 2 Cor. iv. 13. And when he has thus wrought in the word, he then works by it, and helps the believer to act faith upon it. The Holy Spirit puts it into his heart to desire the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby. And he does grow, and is nourished up, as Timothy was, in the words of faith, when he is enabled by the same Spirit to act faith upon the word; for then the word preached profits him, when he can mix faith with it--when faith and the word, like two fluids of the same properties, readily mix together, and closely incorporate. Thus the word nourishes him in the inner man, and he grows thereby. The Spirit applies it and renders it effectual to the promoting of every gracious purpose, for which it was revealed, and by its means he makes the man of God wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Jesus Christ.

This is the usual and common way in which God fulfils the text. He teaches his children spiritual and divine things by his word, as explained and applied by his Spirit: which two cannot be put asunder. The word is the eye, and the Holy Spirit is the light shining upon it. Now a man cannot see without eyes, and having eyes he cannot see without light. So if you have the word without the Spirit, you have eyes without light; and if you have the Spirit without the word,

word, you have light, but no eyes to ſee it: the word and the Spirit therefore muſt go together. To expect that the Spirit will teach you without the word, is rank enthuſiaſm, as great madneſs as to hope to ſee without eyes; and to expect that the word will teach you, without the Spirit, is as great an abſurdity as to pretend to ſee without light; and if any man ſays, that the Spirit teaches him to believe, or to do what is contrary to the written word, he is a mad blaſphemer. God has joined the word and the Spirit; and what God has joined together, let no man put aſunder.

Convinced of theſe things, have you, my brethren, reduced them to practice? Do you go with humility to the word of God to be taught, and do you find that inſtruction from it, of which you ſtand in need? Perhaps you ſay, you do read it, but you find it very difficult: it is ſo hard to be underſtood, that it is for the moſt part to you a ſealed book. This is a very general complaint; but what is the cauſe of it? Certain it is, that this ſcripture cannot be broken—"All thy chil-"dren ſhall be taught of God." The fault is not in God, nor yet in his word. Surely then it is in yourſelves. Either you have not been deeply convinced of your own blindneſs in ſpiritual things, and therefore are not practically perſuaded of the neceſſity of the word; or you have not looked up to the Holy Spirit for his divine teaching,

ing, praying him, in the prophet's words, "Lord, "open thou mine eyes, that I may ſee wond- "rous things out of thy law:" for until he opens your eyes and enlighten them, you cannot ſee any of the wonders contained in the book of God. Conſider theſe points then, and examine them cloſely. Be faithful, my brethren, to your own ſouls, and be not afraid to diſcover the true ground of your complaint. Have you been led to read and to hear the word of God under a ſtrong ſenſe of your darkneſs and blindneſs without it? And do you always ſeek the grace of the Holy Spirit to explain and to apply it? The firſt of theſe is abſolutely neceſſary; becauſe you will not aſk wiſdom of God, until you be convinced you lack it. And you will aſk it with more or leſs earneſtneſs in proportion to the ſenſe you have of your want of it; ſo that when you are made deeply ſenſible of your great ignorance, then you will become very humble and teachable. This is the proper diſpoſition of mind which the Holy Spirit muſt work in you, both before and under divine teaching, and the conſideration of which was the third particular I propoſed to ſpeak to.

Divine teaching is abſolutely neceſſary for the learning of divine things, and God teaches his children by his word and by his Spirit. You may be convinced, my brethren, of theſe truths in ſpeculation, but it is very difficult to bring them

them into practice. For such is the pride of the natural man, that he will not submit to be taught, no, not of God. He will exalt his own reasoning faculties above the wisdom of God's word, and above the teaching of God's Spirit. Although he has nothing to be proud of, being a creature made up of ignorance and sin, yet is he excessively proud: for pride is interwoven in his very frame and constitution. Our Lord says, pride proceeds from within, out of the heart, Mark, vii. 21. It comes from a corrupt principle that is within us, in the heart; there it has taken deep root, and, grown luxuriant, bringing forth a vast crop of proud looks, words, and works. Nothing but the almighty grace of God can pull down the high opinion which this proud creature entertains of himself, and which he will continue to entertain, until he be well disciplined into the knowledge of himself. He must be brought to see his ignorance, and to feel his guilt and misery, before he will be humble enough to apply to God for instruction. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is through his gracious operation that the proud, self-sufficient sinner is made thoroughly acquainted with his ignorance and his sinfulness. The Holy Spirit gives him a view of himself in the glass of the law, and shews him and makes him feel the entire corruption of his nature, the blindness of his understanding, the depravity of his will, and the rebellion

rebellion of his heart. The natural man is a bad ſcholar at this humbling leſſon. He learns it very ſlowly, and with great pain and difficulty. The practice of it is like plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand: for his inbred ſins are as dear to him as any member of his body. But the Holy Spirit ſo alarms him with his guilt, and with his danger, that by degrees he is brought heartily to wiſh for deliverance from his ignorance, and from his ſins; and thus he is made teachable. He becomes ſimple, and is willing to be taught of God. He is brought into a proper frame of mind to ſit with Mary at the maſter's feet, hearing his word, in order to be enlightened with ſaving wiſdom, and to be bleſſed with the comforts of ſaving faith. To perſons of this humble, teachable temper, the ſcripture has made many ſweet promiſes, both when they at firſt go to the ſchool of Chriſt to learn his will, and alſo when they afterwards ſit at his feet hearing his words, that they may do them. In general, it is ſaid, that God giveth grace to the humble, and particularly grace to learn his will, as Pſalm, xxv. 9. "The meek will he "guide in judgment, and the meek will he "teach his way." The meek are they, who, with an humble and lowly ſpirit, receive the word of God, according to the Apoſtle James, i. 21. "Receive with meekneſs the ingrafted "word,

" word, which is able to ſave your ſouls." They ſhall be taught of God, whom he has diſpoſed to receive his word with meekneſs, he will engraft it inwardly in their hearts, and will enable them to bring forth the precious fruits of it in their lives, and thus he will teach them his way. And then they will be able to take up the words of Chriſt, gratefully acknowledging what God has done for them—" We thank " thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, " becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the " wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them " unto babes." The things of God are ſtill hid from the wiſe and prudent, from the wiſe and prudent ones of this world, who ſeek the knowledge of them by mere human learning, which, without grace, only puffs them up, and hinders them from ſeeing their want of divine teaching; from all ſuch he hides the knowledge of ſpiritual things, but he reveals them to thoſe whom the Holy Spirit has made humble and teachable. When ſuch perſons come with a meek temper to be taught of him, then he manifeſts to them the ſecrets of his kingdom: for he reveals them unto babes: unto them that bleſſed promiſe of the New Teſtament is fulfilled, " If any of you lack wiſdom, and is " humbled under the ſenſe of his want of it, " let him aſk it of God, who giveth unto all " aſkers liberally, and upbraideth not, and it " ſhall be given him." James i. 5.

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This then is the proper diſpoſition of mind with which the Holy Spirit prepares the children of God for divine teaching, and by which he helps them to profit under it. He makes them humble, meek, and lowly in their own eyes, and deſirous of being taught of God. To ſuch perſons he giveth grace to underſtand the word, to apply it, and to be edified by it. To thoſe whom he has humbled he giveth his grace, becauſe they will take no merit to themſelves; but will aſcribe the glory of what they learn to their divine teacher, and uſe it to the praiſe of the glory of his grace. You are, I hope, convinced of theſe great truths, but perhaps ſome of you do not ſee clearly how you are to attain this humble, teachable diſpoſition. Are you convinced of your own want of it? If you are, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He has begun to make you ſenſible of your ignorance; and he muſt prepare you to receive inſtruction, as well as give it you. The deſire to be taught of God cometh from him, as well as the teaching itſelf. He muſt work in you both to will and to do: for it is written, Prov. xvi. 1, "The "preparations of the heart in man are from "the Lord;" if there be any preparations in your heart to be taught of God, this is not from yourſelf, it is from the Lord, and is expreſsly aſcribed to him, Gal. v. 23, where meekneſs is mentioned among the other fruits of the Spirit, that meekneſs whereby we receive the engrafted

word

word is the fruit of his grace in the heart. Apply to him for it, and he will make you an humble, teachable ſcholar in the ſchool of Chriſt; and when he has thus diſpoſed you to give him all the glory of teaching you, then to you his promiſe ſhall be fulfilled, and you ſhall be taught of God.

From what has been now offered, the doctrine of the text is, I hope, made plain and clear: if ſcripture authority can convince, and if matter of fact can determine the point, they give in full evidence for the neceſſity of divine teaching, which is farther confirmed from the eſtabliſhed method in which God teaches his children. He revealed his word for their inſtruction, and his Spirit ſtill accompanies the hearing or reading of it, and renders it effectual to the purpoſes for which it was revealed. He ſtill, by his grace, prepares the ſinner's mind to receive it, by convincing him of his ignorance of the things of God, by bringing him with an humble teachable temper to learn them from the word of God, and then he works faith in the ſinner's heart by the word, and helps the believer to act faith upon the word of God's grace, which is able to build him up, and to give him an inheritance among all them which are ſanctified. Theſe particulars have been eſtabliſhed upon expreſs paſſages of Holy Scripture; and what effect, my brethren, has our preſent conſideration of them had upon you? Has it been the means

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of ſhewing any of you how much you ſtood in need of divine teaching? Has it ſtirred up fervent deſires in any of you for the teachings of God's Spirit? If neither of theſe good effects followed, what is the cauſe which hindered? If you believe the ſcripture to be the word of God, you cannot deny the doctrine. No words can be plainer than theſe written in the prophets, "They ſhall be ALL taught of God." If all are not to be taught of God, how do you underſtand the words? Do you think they ſpeak only of the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, to whom they were fulfilled, but we are not now to expect their accompliſhment? This is the opinion of many perſons, but it is quite unſcriptural. The 54th chapter of Iſaiah, as explained by an infallible interpreter in the New Teſtament, treats of the Gentile church in the laſt days, of which it is ſaid, verſe 13, "And all thy chil-
"dren ſhall be taught of the Lord," ALL without exception, all God's children among the Gentiles in every age ſhall be taught of the Lord. To the ſame purpoſe the Prophet Jeremiah, ch. xxxi. ſpeaks of the new covenant which was to be eſtabliſhed in the laſt days, declares from the mouth of God, ver. 34, "And
"they ſhall teach no more every man his neigh-
"bour, and every man his brother, ſaying,
"Know the Lord; for they ſhall all know me
"from the leaſt of them to the greateſt of them,
"ſaith the Lord." This promiſe belongs to the

new

new covenant, under which God himſelf engages to teach his people, and they all, from the leaſt to the greateſt, ſhall know the Lord. And when our bleſſed Saviour in the text referred to theſe and ſuch-like promiſes, which are written in the prophets, he made no limitation, but ſaid, "they ſhall be all taught of God."—*all* in every age of the church, who are made ſenſible of their want of divine teaching, and look up to heaven for a divine teacher, ſhall be taught of God. Certainly theſe paſſages cannot be ſo far wreſted and tortured as to make them ſpeak for divine teaching in one age of the church only. How can you, with any appearance of truth, fix a limited ſenſe to theſe univerſal propoſitions—ALL thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord—they ſhall ALL know me from the leaſt to the greateſt: for they ſhall be ALL taught of God—All were to be taught by him, all his children, therefore his children now have the ſame promiſe of divine teaching which the primitive Chriſtians had; for the promiſe is to us, and to our children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.

Since then the ſcripture ſo clearly confutes this abſurd and wicked opinion, do you, my brethren, give it up, and acknowledge the neceſſity of divine teaching? If not, what other objection have you againſt the doctrine? Have

you

you been uſed to think, that it carried with it an air of enthuſiaſm? I know many perſons look upon it in this light. If any of you do, pray tell us what you mean by enthuſiaſm? for it ſeems to us only a bad name given to the beſt thing. At this day the knowledge of vital and experimental religion is ſo far loſt, that whenever the generality of our people hear it ſpoken of, they do not underſtand it; and what they do not underſtand, they reject under the odious name of enthuſiaſm; ſo that this name does not ſtand for any bad properties in the thing to which they apply it, but only ſignifies their diſlike of it. And if they expreſs their diſlike by an hard name, what hurt can that do? Can it really turn the words of truth and ſoberneſs into enthuſiaſm? Can that be enthuſiaſm, which believes God to be a faithful promiſe-keeping God, and that his word cannot be broken? What! is it enthuſiaſm to deſire to be taught of God, and to aſk wiſdom of him, after he has commanded his children to aſk it, and has engaged to teach it to them? Surely, no. God's promiſes muſt be fulfilled, and they, who ſeek their accompliſhment, cannot be diſappointed. He hath ſpoken by the mouth of his holy prophets, that all his children ſhall be taught of God; and heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, before one tittle of theſe words ſhall fail. Men and brethren, what do you think now of this

objection, which wants to make God a liar, for promiſing to teach his children, and which treats them as enthuſiaſts who expect to be taught of him? Certainly you cannot defend ſuch a blaſphemous opinion. Well then, the way is farther cleared for a favourable reception of the doctrine; and do you indeed receive it? Perhaps you aſſent to it. But what ſort of an aſſent do you give? Is it active and operative? If not, what will it avail? You will learn none of the things of God, by ſimply believing that God does teach them to his children. You muſt aſk, if you would have: you muſt ſeek, if you would find that wiſdom which cometh from above. And you muſt aſk with earneſtneſs, and ſeek with diligence; not as if you could thereby merit, but to expreſs your wants and your humility. The divine direction in this caſe is, Prov. ii. 3, 4, &c. "If thou crieſt after know-"ledge, and lifteſt up thy voice for under-"ſtanding," not aſking faintly, but crying aloud, and lifting up the voice through the fervency of the deſire after wiſdom. "And if thou "ſeekeſt her as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for her as hid treaſures," ſeeking with as great pains, and ſearching with as conſtant application, as ever worldly man took to enrich himſelf: "Then "ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, "and find the knowledge of God: for the Lord

"giveth wiſdom," he giveth it to every one who ſeeks with humble diligence.

Theſe are words of comfort to you who deſire to be taught of God, and who are ſeeking of him the knowledge of divine things. Seek, as he has directed you, and you ſhall find. He will teach you, becauſe he has made you teachable. He has already taught you one leſſon, which is perhaps the hardeſt you have to learn. He has convinced you of your entire ignorance of divine things. You no longer take up your reſt in the fancied abilities of nature, but are conſulting the word of God, and praying for the teachings of the Spirit of God. This is the appointed way to receive inſtruction. And if you wait in this way, he who directed you to the way will meet you and inſtruct you in it. Only remember, that his glory, being the motive and end of all his dealings with men, muſt be your motive and end in learning divine things. You muſt have a ſingle eye to his glory in aſking knowledge of him; and what he gives, you muſt uſe to his glory. His glory muſt be promoted by all that he teaches you: and therefore you muſt come to learn of him, *humble*, under a continual ſenſe of your ignorance and unworthineſs, and *meek*, diſpoſed like a new-born babe to receive the ſincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, and you muſt be *a diligent*

gent ſcholar, you muſt read much, and pray more; yea, you muſt watch in prayer with all perſeverance, and then the promiſe, which wiſdom itſelf has made, ſhall be fulfilled to you. Prov. viii. 34, "Bleſſed is the man that heareth me, "watching daily at my gates, waiting at the "poſts of my doors." He that watches and waits thus, is bleſſed: for God, who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, will ſhine into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.

What thanks can we render unto God for his exceeding grace, who ſtill ſhines into the hearts of his children? Glory be to his great name, there are many among us who have reaſon to praiſe him for his divine teaching. They have found him faithful to fulfil his promiſes: for he has opened their blind eyes, and has led them into the knowledge and belief of the truth. Daily are they magnifying the riches of his infinite love, which has brought them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, and has tranſlated them out of the kingdom of ſatan into the kingdom of his dear Son. Theſe perſons are witneſſes for God, and can ſet to their ſeal that he ſtill teaches his children by his word, and by his Spirit: for they have been illuminated with the true knowledge and underſtanding of his word, and by their living they ſet it forth, and ſhew it accordingly.

This is the happy ſtate of ſo many of you as are real Chriſtians. You have experience of the truth of the text, and know it to be an undoubted matter of fact. My Chriſtian brethren, what return will you make to your divine teacher for the comfortable leſſons which he has taught you? What leſs can you do, than praiſe him with your lives, as well as with your lips? Praiſe him for what you have already learnt, and continue humbly to wait on him for your growth in knowledge. Remember that the new man which you have put on is to be renewed in knowledge day by day. The ſpirit of wiſdom is to help you to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. This is your privilege; and it is your intereſt to make a conſtant uſe of it. The wiſeſt of us know but little of what is to be known, therefore you ſhould be diligent in your attendance upon the means appointed of God for your teaching. Read the word, and meditate in it day and night; and when the Holy Spirit explains and applies it, then it will be a lantern unto your feet, and a light unto your paths. Pray over the word. Prayer will digeſt it, and the prayer of faith mixed with it, will make it nouriſhing and ſtrengthening to the inner man. And thus you will grow in grace, and be renewed in knowledge—the underſtanding will be renewed with ſtill clearer views of ſpiritual things,

things, the heart, no longer prejudiced againſt them, will be renewed with a more determinate choice of them, and the affections will be renewed with a more hearty love, and a fuller enjoyment of them. Hereby your ſanctification will be carried on, and you will be renewed day by day in true holineſs after the image of him that created you.—Having therefore theſe privileges, dearly beloved brethren, having ſuch a teacher, and ſuch things to learn of him, having the ſpirit of the Moſt High God to teach you all things, which belong to your preſent peace, and to your eternal glory. Oh what diligence ſhould you uſe in attending upon the means, by which your divine teacher has promiſed to inſtruct you. In them be ye conſtantly found waiting, waiting with humble, teachable tempers, and praying for the bleſſing of God upon the uſe of his appointed means. And while you thus continue to wait upon God, he will continue to teach you. He has promiſed it to his children, and he cannot lie. He will make you wiſe unto ſalvation.

Having thus exhorted you, my Chriſtian brethren, to make a diligent uſe of the great privilege of the new covenant, I have nothing farther to offer, but my prayers. May he that heareth prayer, ſend down his bleſſing upon what has been now ſpoken. May the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the father of glory, give

unto you the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints, and what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us ward who believe. Oh may our God manifeſt theſe great truths to your underſtandings, and give you the ſweet experience of them in your hearts, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding, and that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God, until you ſee him face to face; and then ſhall you know, even as alſo you are known. To this perfect knowledge and ever-bleſſed fruition of God may the Lord Jeſus bring you all by the miniſtry of his word, and by the teachings of his Spirit, that you may be for ever happy in giving thanks and praiſe to the three divine perſons in one Jehovah, to whom the church in earth and heaven aſcribes all glory in time and in eternity. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

UPON THE

MORAL LAW.

DISCOURSE II.

UPON THE

MORAL LAW.

DISCOURSE II.

ROMANS vii. 12.

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, juſt, and good.

THE great Creator and poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, hath an indiſputable authority to make laws for the government of his creatures, and to require their obedience. Since every thing that they have is received from his hands, and held under him at his pleaſure, it therefore behoves them to enquire upon what terms they hold it. And if God has given them any laws, it is their duty to ſtudy them, and their intereſt to obey them. If there be any ſanctions to enforce theſe laws, any rewards or puniſhments, they ſhould enquire, where theſe things are to be known, and by what means diſcovered, that they may obtain the reward and eſcape the puniſhment.

Whenever

Whenever a ſerious unprejudiced perſon deſires to be ſatisfied in theſe points which ſo nearly concern his preſent peace of conſcience, and his future happineſs, he will ſoon be convinced that God has made a gracious proviſion for his inſtruction. God has opened his mind and will in this matter. He has recorded his laws, and publiſhed them. The ſacred volume of divine ſtatutes is in our hands, and in our mother tongue. It is ſo very ſhort that none can want time to peruſe it, and it is ſo very plain and intelligible, as to the rule of duty, that none can plead ignorance. He that runs may read it, and the ſimple may underſtand it, and learn knowledge: for upon a very curſory view of this divine treatiſe, it will appear, that there are three diſtinct bodies of law mentioned in it, namely, the moral law, the ceremonial law, and the law of faith. We are all highly concerned to enquire into the nature of theſe laws, and therefore I purpoſe, through God's aſſiſtance, to enquire into the ſcope and deſign of each of them. At preſent I ſhall confine myſelf to the moral law, which alone is ſpoken of in my text. The apoſtle is treating of its uſefulneſs to diſcover the ſinfulneſs of ſin: "I had not known ſin," ſays he, "but by the "law;" the law muſt firſt lay down a rule, before it can be known what ſin is, which is the tranſgreſſion of that rule: "For I had not known "luſt," and that the very firſt riſing and motion of

evil in the heart was a ſin, " unleſs the law had " ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet." This is the law of the tenth commandment; from whence it is very evident that St. Paul is here treating of the moral law, which is of ſuch perfect purity, as to reach to the deſires and covetings of the heart, and which, by reſtraining them, makes them appear more ſinful, and grow more outrageous. " But ſin taking occaſion by the commandment, " wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence: " for without the law ſin was dead," although it be in us, yet it is not perceived, until it be held before the holy ſpiritual law of God, and then it begins to ſtir and rage: for as it follows, " I was " once alive without the law," ſays the apoſtle, when I knew not the law I thought myſelf alive, my conſcience never troubled me, nor did I apprehend the deadly nature of ſin, " but when " the commandment came," when I began to underſtand the commandment in its ſpiritual nature, and it came to my conſcience, and was applied with a divine power to my heart, " then " ſin revived, and I died," I found myſelf dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: " for the ſame command- " ment which was ordained unto life was found " to be unto me unto death: but ſin took occa- " ſion by the commandment," not through any fault in the commandment, but entirely through my own fault, " deceived me, and by it ſlew " me. What ſhall we ſay then? Is the law and

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" the commandment ſin? God forbid. The law " is holy," all the the fault is in us, who abuſe the law, " and the commandment is holy, and " juſt, and good." The occaſion of the words and the context thus in part opened and explained may help us to determine,

Firſt, What the moral law is.

Secondly, Whether it be ſtill in force.

Thirdly, Whether we have all kept it, and if not,

Fourthly, What is the penalty due to the breach of it; and then I ſhall draw ſome practical inferences from theſe particulars. And may the Spirit of the living God apply what ſhall be ſpoken. May he enlighten all your underſtandings with a clear view of the ſpiritual nature of the moral law, that by it you may be brought to the knowledge of ſin, and to ſee and to feel your want of a Saviour. Under the teachings of this good Spirit let us conſider,

Firſt, What the moral law is. I define it to be the holy, juſt, and good will of God made known and promulged to his creatures in all theſe particulars, wherein he requires their perfect obedience, in order to their happineſs. The law is the diſcovery of his will: for the almighty Creator and ſovereign Lord of heaven and earth governs all his works and creatures according to the good pleaſure of his own will. His will is

the

the abſolutely perfect law of the natural world. He hath given to the inanimate works of his hands a law which ſhall not be broken. The active powers in nature ſhall work, and paſſive matter ſhall obey by an unalterable rule, until the heavens be folded up like a ſcroll, and the earth and all the works therein ſhall be burnt up. And his will is as abſolute a law to his rational creatures, as to the natural agents: becauſe he can enact no laws, but what partake of his own adorable perfections. His law is his will made known. It is a copy of his infinitely pure mind. It is a fair tranſcript of his holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and of every other divine attribute: for by the law he diſcovers to his creatures what it is his will they ſhould be and do, in order to preſerve his favour. He would have them holy, juſt, and good, and the law makes known to them the rule of their obedience; by an exact conformity to which they are holy, juſt, and good. The will of God revealed in the law is holy, and conformity to it is holineſs. Holineſs, in the Old Teſtament language, ſignifies a ſeparation from impurity, and when applied to the divine nature, it rather expreſſes what God is not, than what he is. It is a negative idea, denoting an entire ſeparation from every thing which can defile. Holineſs in God excludes all poſſibility of pollution. In him there neither is, nor can be, the leaſt impurity. He is of purer

eyes

eyes than to behold the leaſt iniquity. He cannot even look upon any thing which is in the leaſt unclean: for without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord. Now the law is an exact copy of God's holineſs. It is the outward diſcovery of his moſt holy mind and will, informing his creatures how perfectly pure they muſt preſerve themſelves, if they would preſerve his favour. The law diſcovers to them what God is, and ſhews how like him they ought to be in holineſs. And ſince God cannot behold the leaſt impurity, conſequently his law cannot, becauſe it is his mind and will revealed concerning this matter. He will not ſuffer any deviation from his law, no, not in thought: for the language of the law is poſitive and expreſs out of the mouth of the ſupreme law-giver himſelf---" Be ye holy, for I " am holy." And are you, my brethren, thus holy? This ſhould be a matter of cloſe examination. Are you what the law requires you to be? Do you look upon the law as perfectly, infinitely holy in itſelf, even as holy as God is; and have you conſidered ſin as an offence againſt the holineſs of God and of his law, even ſuch an unpardonable offence, that you could never make the leaſt ſatisfaction for it? It is very evident theſe things are not well underſtood, becauſe the practice of mankind ſhews what low ideas they entertain of them. What makes ſin appear light and little, and ſome offences ſmall? Is it

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not becauſe ſinners are ignorant of the abſolutely perfect holineſs of the law? And after they have broken it, how mean an opinion have they of its holineſs, when they think that a little ſorrow, and ſome few tears, that repentance and amendment can make them holy, and ſatisfy the demands of the broken law? If any of you entertain theſe unworthy ideas of God and of his law, you ſhould conſider that, although God require you to be perfectly holy, yet he can require nothing of you but what is juſt. The law is juſt as well as holy, juſt in all its demands, and juſt in the rule of its proceſs in rewarding obedience and puniſhing tranſgreſſion. The ſcripture word for juſtice is taken from human affairs, and from thence is applied to divine. In the firſt ages of the world, money was paid and received by weight, and he who kept an even balance in paying and receiving was a juſt man. His juſtice conſiſted in keeping the ſcales even, in weighing all things with an equal balance, and in giving and taking only what was lawful and right. Now the law holds this balance of juſtice in its hands, that it may prove the Judge of all the earth does right, and will be glorified in all that he requires of his creatures: for the holy obedience which he demands of them is a juſt obedience. He had a ſovereign authority to require it, and he gave them power to pay it him, and therefore they could not complain of any injuſtice

injuſtice, if he ſhould inflict the puniſhment threatened to the diſobedient, any more than if he ſhould beſtow the reward promiſed to the obedient. Thus the law is juſt. It is the exact copy of God's juſtice, and is as perfectly juſt as God is. It can no more require or do an unjuſt thing, than God can: for the law only diſcovers what is the infinitely juſt mind and will of God concerning the behaviour of his creatures. The law ſays, "Do this and thou ſhalt live. "Tranſgreſs this, and dying thou ſhalt ſurely "die." This is the will of the ſupreme law-giver, and his juſtice is engaged to ſee the honour of his law maintained, as well in puniſhing tranſgreſſion with death, as in rewarding obedience with life. The law cannot poſſibly do any injuſtice, becauſe it is directed by the unerring will of God. God, and his will, and his law, are alike juſt; for it is written in the law, Deut. xxxii. 4, "The Lord's work is perfect; for all "his ways are judgment, a God of truth, and "without iniquity, juſt and right is he."

All his ways and dealings with the children of men are perfectly juſt, and they are alſo good. His law is good. It partakes of the goodneſs of its divine author, inaſmuch as it tends to promote the welfare and happineſs of his creatures. The creature was made to ſhew forth the glory of its great Creator, and the law was the rule by which it was to walk in order to promote

promote his glory, and in this holy walking there was all good to be met with. It was the way of pleaſantneſs, and the path of peace. It preſerved the aſſurance of the divine favour, afforded a perpetual feaſt of conſcience, and gave ſure and certain hopes of a glorious immortality; for Moſes thus deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law, that the man who doeth theſe things ſhall live by them. If he do all the things written in the book of the law he ſhall live unto God, and ſhall live with God. He ſhall enjoy a life of happineſs here in the love and communion of God, and he ſhall enjoy an endleſs life of glory. Surely then the law is good! Since the keeping of it would have produced all good, and ſince the tranſgreſſing of it has brought all the evil upon man which he can ſuffer in time and in eternity. Conſider, my brethren, how good the law is from that deluge of evil which came in upon the breach of it. When the Lord God, at the end of his ſix days works, ſurveyed all that he had made, behold it was very good. There was then no evil of any kind to afflict either body or ſoul; but by ſin the body became ſubject to ſickneſs, pain, and death, and the ſoul to guilt and miſery, and in the next life both body and ſoul were ſubject to the worm that never dieth, and to the fire that never ſhall be quenched.

Such is the goodneſs of the law. It is the allwiſe proviſion which God has made for his own glory, and for the happineſs of his creatures; to whom he has publiſhed it. He made it known to our firſt parents in paradiſe. It was their rule of action, while they ſtood in the likeneſs and image of God. They had no oppoſition then to his good and acceptable and perfect will, but the underſtanding had a clear view of it, the will choſe it, and the heart loved it; and they were able to do it with all their mind, and with all their ſtrength. And when ſin entered into the world, the will of God was not changed, nor his law repealed. The law was in full force from Adam to Moſes, in whoſe time the Lord God recorded it with the moſt awful majeſty on mount Sinai, and engraved it with his own hands upon two tables of ſtone. And it ſtands unrepealed to this day; promiſing life to obedience, and threatening death to tranſgreſſion.

Since then the law has been properly promulged, an holy, juſt, and good law, that altereth not, let us hear what it requires. It is the will of the law-giver, that he who doeth the things written in the book of the law ſhall live by them. But then he muſt do all things without exception. He muſt not fail in any one point. If he will enter into life, he muſt keep all the commandments. He muſt be univerſally holy,

juſt, and good, as the law is. If he ever receive the promiſed reward, he muſt perform the condition: that is, he muſt pay the law perfect uninterrupted obedience with every faculty of ſoul and body, in their utmoſt ſtrength and vigour: for it cannot ſuffer any tranſgreſſion; but for the leaſt inflicts the threatened puniſhment.

This is an eſſential property of the moral law. Upon the very firſt offence it cuts the ſinner off from all claim to the promiſed reward, and as to any thing that he can do cuts him off for ever. It is not in his power to make himſelf innocent again. Having once failed in his obedience, the law knows nothing of mercy, cannot accept the greateſt repentance, nor be ſatisfied with the deepeſt ſorrow for what is paſt; but immediately paſſes ſentence according to what is written, "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all "things which are written in the book of the "law to do them." If you fail in one ſingle inſtance of obedience, you do not continue to perform all things, but fall under the curſe of the broken law, and are as much liable to puniſhment, though not in the ſame degree, as if you had failed in every inſtance. In which ſenſe the words of St. James are to be underſtood, "He "that offendeth in one point is guilty of all."

I have now gone through the ſeveral parts of the definition before given of the moral law, and it appears to be the holy, juſt, and good will of

God made known and promulged to his creatures in all thoſe particulars, wherein he requires their perfect obedience in order to their happineſs. Since this is the caſe, it highly concerns every one of us to enquire, whether we be under an obligation to keep this law, which is the ſecond particular I propoſed to conſider, namely,

Whether the moral law be ſtill in force, and ſtill requires of them, who expect to be ſaved by it, perfect unſinning obedience. And upon the firſt propoſal of this queſtion it would occur to every attentive perſon, that the law, being as holy, juſt, and good as God is, can no more admit of any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning, than God himſelf can. He ſays, "I change not," and how then can his law, which is the diſcovery of his mind and will be changeable? Man may change, but the law is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever. It altereth not. If man does not keep it, it will loſe none of its honour. Juſtice will be glorified, by ſupporting the holineſs of the law, and by inflicting the deſerved puniſhment on the tranſgreſſors of it. But let us conſult the law and the teſtimony. The Pſalmiſt ſays, Pſalm cxi. 7, 8, "All his commandments "are ſure: they ſtand faſt for ever and ever, and "are done in truth and uprightneſs." ALL his commandments, not excepting one, are fixed upon a ſure, immoveable foundation: for they ſtand faſt for ever and ever in full force, eſtabliſh-

ed by the unchangeable will of God, and are ordained in perfect harmony with all the divine attributes, being done in truth, which cannot lie, and uprightneſs, which cannot err. To the ſame purpoſe he ſays in another Pſalm, cxix, 160, "Thy word is true from the beginning; and "every one of thy righteous judgments en-"dureth for ever;" theſe righteous judgments are the decrees of the moral law, and there is not one of them that can be repealed, but they ſhall all endure in full force for ever. Our bleſſed Saviour has thrown great light upon this ſubject. The whole moral law is ſummed up in the ten commandments, which he has reduced to theſe two, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour: on theſe two commandments, ſays he, hang all the law and the prophets; for love is the fulfilling of the law, and love never faileth, conſequently the law of love can never fail, but its debt of gratitude will be paying, and happy is he, who ſhall be paying it to all eternity.—Thus the moral law ſtands eſtabliſhed by the authority of our divine teacher. In his ſermon upon the mount he reforms the abuſes and falſe comments which the Scribes and Phariſees had put upon the moral law, and he begins with this remark, Matt. v. 17, "Think not that I "am come to deſtroy the law and the prophets; "I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil;" to fulfil the law by paying it infinitely perfect obedience,

dience, and by being obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs; and by this active and paſſive obedience he ſhewed that it was eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs away, than that one tittle of the law ſhould fail. If the law could have abated any thing of its demands, there would have been no neceſſity for Chriſt's fulfilling it by his obedience and death. But the law was unalterable. It could not be ſatisfied with any obedience, but what was abſolutely holy, juſt, and good; and as all men had failed in paying it this obedience, they muſt therefore have been puniſhed in their own perſons, unleſs God, out of the riches of his wiſdom and grace, had found out a way, by which the honour of his law might be advanced, and yet the ſinner might be ſaved. And that was by ſending his Son to fulfil the law. He was equal to this work; becauſe he was God, equal with the Father, and he took our nature, and God and man were united in one Chriſt, that he might be capable of doing and ſuffering, and meriting in an infinite degree. Accordingly, in the fulneſs of time, he ſtood up in the place of ſinners, and therefore he became liable to do and to ſuffer whatever law and juſtice demanded, that having magnified the law, by obeying its precepts, and made it honourable by ſuffering its penalties, the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in them, who ſhould believe on him to everlaſting life; but the law is

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ſtill in force to condemn every one who does not ſavingly believe on him, and will be for ever in force to inflict the deſerved puniſhment.

It is evident then that the moral law ſtands to this day unrepealed. Although man may be changed from what he was at firſt, yet the law is not. It is ſtill the holy, juſt, and good will of God requiring perfect obedience.---And when the holineſs of the law is violated, the juſtice of God is bound to ſee the ſanctions of the law executed upon the diſobedient; and the divine goodneſs cannot plead an arreſt of judgment, becauſe it is a good law which is broken, and therefore it is a good thing to ſee that the tranſgreſſors of it be paid the wages of ſin.

My brethren, are not theſe very alarming truths, and ought they not to ſuggeſt to every one of you ſuch reflections as theſe? What, am I under the law, bound to keep it with a perfect unſinning obedience? Can the law abate nothing of its demands, but muſt I love God always, and with all my mind, heart, ſoul, and ſtrength, and my neighbour as myſelf, if I hope to enter into life by keeping the commandments? Surely then I ought to examine, whether I have always loved God and my neighbour, as the law requires? If theſe be the thoughts of your hearts, then you are prepared to follow me to a ſerious conſideration of the third head of diſcourſe, namely,

Whether

Whether we all have kept the moral law. Its demands are very great. It will not accept of any obedience, unleſs it be continual. You muſt continue, without the leaſt interruption, to do all things, that are written in the book of the law. And have any of you walked with a ſtedfaſt courſe in the way of the commandments, without once turning aſide? Conſult conſcience. Does it not accuſe? Conſult ſcripture. Does it not ſay, "ALL we like ſheep have gone aſtray, "we have turned every one to his own way?" leaving the way of God's commandments.

The law alſo requires ſpiritual obedience. It reaches to the inmoſt thoughts and intents of the heart. You muſt never have one ſinful thought in you, if you expect life from your keeping the law; for the law is ſpiritual. It ſearches the heart and the reins, and ſtrikes at the very firſt motion or riſing of ſin. One ſinful deſire cuts you off from legal righteouſneſs, as much as ten thouſand ſins: for it is written, "Thou ſhalt not covet;" and he that covets offends in one point, and therefore is guilty of all.

Beſides, the law is perfect, perfectly holy, juſt, and good: for it is the will of God, and can no more ſuffer the leaſt iniquity in its ſight, than God himſelf can. It will abate nothing of abſolutely perfect obedience. All the ſtrength and all the mind, every faculty of ſoul and body is to be exert-

ed, and with their utmoſt vigour, in the obſervance of the law. The heart too is to love it, and the affections are to be delighted with obeying it.

This is what the law demands of every one of you. It will have a continual, a ſpiritual, and a perfect love of God, without one thought ever ariſing in oppoſition to his holy will, and the love of your neighbour muſt be like the love of yourſelf. And does any man or woman keep the law in this manner? Do any of you? Certainly you cannot ſuppoſe that you have never broken the law, becauſe you have juſt now declared the contrary out of your own mouths. You have confeſſed this day, and on your bended knees before God—"We have offended againſt thy holy "laws. We have left undone thoſe things which "we ought to have done: and we have done thoſe "things which we ought not to have done."—And when you ſpake theſe words, did not your conſciences aſſure you, that they were true? For have you not offended againſt the holy law of God, and have not you left undone what it required, and done what it forbid? Surely you did not prevaricate with God, when in another part of the ſervice you confeſſed that you had broken all the commandments. The rubric ſays—"Then ſhall the prieſt, turning to the people, "rehearſe diſtinctly all the ten commandments; "and the people ſtill kneeling, ſhall, after every "commandment, aſk God mercy for their tranſ-

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" greſſion thereof for the time paſt, and grace to " keep the ſame for the time to come," and accordingly after every commandment you prayed God to have mercy upon you for breaking it, and to incline your hearts to keep it. And have you not all ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God, by robbing his law of its due obedience?

What! would you make me a breaker of all the commandments, ſays ſome ſelf-righteous formaliſt? I never murdered any body, nor committed adultery. No? Had you never one angry thought or word againſt your neighbour? This is murder. Or did not one impure and unclean thought ever ariſe in your mind? This is ſin, according to the ſpiritual law of God. You look at your actions in the glaſs of man's law, and becauſe you have not outwardly offended, you think you have kept the law of God. There is your miſtake. Look at Matt. v. 21, &c. and at 1 John iii. 15, and you will ſee that anger and hatred are murder in the eye of God; and read Matt. v. 27, 28, where our Lord teaches you, that one luſtful look is heart-adultery. God regards the heart, and heart-ſin is as much ſin againſt his ſpiritual law as outward tranſgreſſion; and when the formaliſt ſees his heart naked and open, as God ſees it, he will not pretend that he has not broken all the commandments, but will rather deſire God to have mercy upon him, and to incline his heart to keep his laws.

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If any of you refuſe to be determined by theſe authorities, hear what the Lord God has declared concerning you, and his decree will, I hope, be deciſive. He is repreſented, in the 14th Pſalm, as looking down from heaven upon the children of men to ſee if there were any that did underſtand and ſeek after God. But they were all gone out of the way; they were altogether become filthy, there was none that did good, no, not one; there was not one of the children of men that did good and ſinned not. We have, in the third chapter of the Romans, the apoſtle's comment upon this pſalm. After having proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under ſin, and tranſgreſſors of the law, as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one, legally righteous, he ſays—ver. 19, "Now we know that what things ſoever the "law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under the "law, that every mouth may be ſtopped, and "all the world may become guilty before God." Thus God himſelf has declared, that you have not done good, that you are under ſin, and in his ſight guilty. And what can you object to theſe ſcriptures? Sirs, are you not greatly alarmed at hearing them? For they come home to every one's caſe, and ought to reach every one's conſcience. And what are the preſent apprehenſions of your minds concerning them? Have you broken the holy law of God, and you know

know you have, and do you not dread the conſequence of your tranſgreſſion? What can tempt you to hope that you ſhall eſcape the threatened penalty? Has your ſorrow for breaking the law, or your repentance, or your amendment, merit enough ſo far to undo the ſin committed, as that law cannot demand, nor juſtice inflict puniſhment for it? Or have you ſome blind notions of abſolute mercy in God, as if he would ceaſe to be juſt, rather than not be merciful to you? Men and brethren, if any or all of theſe falſe notions tempt you to be ſecure under the breach of the law, and under the wrath of the almighty law-giver, let us bring them to the ſtandard of ſcripture, and enquire,

Fourthly, What is the penalty due to the breach of the moral law?

When God publiſhed his law, he enforced it with proper ſanctions. He promiſed reward to the obedient—"Do this, and thou ſhalt live." And he threatened puniſhment to the diſobedient—"In the day that thou tranſgreſſeſt, dying "thou ſhalt ſurely die." This is the rule of God's proceſs. If you keep the law, you ſhall have the life promiſed. But if you tranſgreſs, you ſhall be alienated from the life of God, and ſubject to death, to the firſt and to the ſecond death, to a death of nature, and to a death of grace: for both theſe kinds of death are the puniſhment of ſin: "For as by one man ſin en-

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" tered into the world, and death by ſin, ſo " death paſſed upon all men, for that all have " ſinned :" And beſides this death of the body, there is a death of the ſoul—" The ſoul that " ſinneth, it ſhall die," Ezek. xviii. 4, it ſhall be alienated from the life of God for ever and ever, and ſhall ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire; ſo that the broken law not only cuts you off from the fountain of life, but alſo pours out its curſes, and inflicts real torments upon the unholy, the unjuſt, and the evil, according to the deſcription in Rev. xxi. 8, " And the " fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, " and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſor- " cerers, and idolaters, and all liars, ſhall have " their part in the lake which burneth with " fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond " death."

Theſe are the penalties which every tranſ- greſſor of the law deſerves, and theſe God has threatened to inflict. His will herein is un- changeable. His truth requires the performance of his threatenings. His juſtice is bound to ſee them inflicted. His holineſs and goodneſs call upon juſtice for the immediate execution of the penalties due to ſin. And how can the ſinner eſcape? What can he do to deliver himſelf? He has nothing in his own power wherewith to ſatisfy the demands of law and juſtice. Sup- poſe him ſorrowful for his ſin; that ſorrow

proves

proves him guilty, and leaves him ſo. Say, he tries to repent; the law knows nothing of repentance; its language is, Do this, or thou ſhalt die. Grant, he amends his life for the future, yet what becomes of his paſt ſins? Is his doing part of his duty any ſatisfaction for neglecting part of it? The law makes no proviſion for any ſuch groundleſs pleas, but inſiſts upon perfect obedience, and for the leaſt failure puts the ſinner under the curſe and under the wrath of God, and there leaves him to ſuffer the juſt puniſhment of his ſin.

But ſome perſons perhaps may object, if this be the caſe, what fleſh can be ſaved? None, no, not one, can be ſaved by keeping the law: for all have ſinned and tranſgreſſed the law of God: therefore, by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight.

But ſtill ſome may aſk, Why then do you preach the law? Becauſe it is a ſchool-maſter to bring men to Chriſt. It teaches them the nature of ſin, and convinces them of their want of a Saviour. "By the law is the knowledge of "ſin," Rom. iii. 20, and vii. 7. Men are ſecure and careleſs in ſin, until the law, that worketh wrath, reach their conſciences, then they begin to know ſin, and to feel the exceeding ſinfulneſs of it: "for it is the miniſtration of condemna-"tion," 2 Cor. iii. 9. The law, ſpiritually underſtood and applied, convinces the ſinner that he

he is a condemned creature, ſhews him in God's word the ſentence paſt upon him, and makes him dread the execution of it. And thus it becomes to him "the miniſtration of death," 2 Cor. iii. 7, proving him to be guilty of ſin, and to be deſerving of death. The Apoſtle's caſe is very common. I thought myſelf alive, ſays he, without the law; he had no doubt but he was alive to God, while he was a ſtrict phariſee, but when the holy ſpiritual nature of the law was made known to him, he found himſelf to be dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. This then is the office of the law. It brings tranſgreſſors to the knowledge of ſin, condemns them for it, and puts them under the ſentence of death, and when the law has thus convinced them of their guilt and of their danger, they then find their want of a Saviour. But without this work of the law, they would not have been ſenſible that they ſtood in any need of him. If they were never ſick, they would never ſend for the phyſician. If they were never brought to the knowledge of ſin, they would never deſire the knowledge of a Saviour. If they never found themſelves under guilt and condemnation, they would never ſue for his pardon, and would never aſk life of him, unleſs they found that they deſerved to die the firſt and the ſecond death. For theſe reaſons the law muſt be taught. It is the ſchool-maſter appointed of God to bring

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ſinners unto Chriſt, and when the ſchool-maſter comes in the name and power of the divine Spirit, and convinces them of their diſtreſſed ſtate and condition, and makes them ſenſible of their guilt and of their miſery, then he brings them to Chriſt, earneſtly to aſk, and humbly to receive mercy from him, who is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.

And now, men and brethren, let us hear this ſchool-maſter, who is ſent from heaven to teach us a divine leſſon. He ſpeaks to you, ye careleſs and ſecure in ſin, and denounces the anger of the almighty law-giver againſt you. Oh! with what a terrible voice does he reveal the wrath of God from heaven againſt all your ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs. There is nothing dreadful in earth or hell, nothing to be feared in time or in eternity, but what is included in this moſt awful ſentence, "Curſed be he that confirmeth "not all the words of this law to do them." Deut. xxvii. 26. Have you done them? Have you done ALL that the law required? And in the perfect manner required? I dare appeal to your conſciences. You may try to ſtifle their evidence, but they will ſpeak; and do they not at this very time charge you with ſin? You know that you have not kept all the law, and what then is the conſequence? Why, the law pronounces you curſed, and it would make your ears tingle, and your heart melt within you, if you

you were to conſider what it is to be under the curſes of the law, and to have the wrath of God abiding upon you for ever and ever. Have you no ſenſe of theſe things, and no fearful apprehenſions about your preſent condition? Is not conſcience alarmed at the greatneſs of your danger, and do not the terrors of the law ſtir you up to flee from the wrath to come? If not, if all be quiet therein, while you hear the law of the moſt high God, which ought to convince you of your guilt, and to make you apprehenſive of your miſery, then you are indeed ſleeping the ſleep of death. Oh may the God of all mercy take pity on you and awaken you! leſt you ſhould ſleep on, until the curſes of the law be actually inflicted, and wrath come upon you to the uttermoſt.

Some perſons may think it happy for them that they are not careleſs and ſecure in ſin; for they endeavour to keep the law as well as they can, and God is a merciful God, he will forgive them, when they do amiſs. This is a common, but it is a very dangerous miſtake: for it ſuppoſes that the law can abate ſomething of its demands, and can accept of an imperfect obedience. Whereas the law is the holy, juſt, and good will of God, which altereth not. It requires perfect and univerſal obedience; and in caſe of the leaſt tranſgreſſion, condemns the ſinner, and paſſes ſentence. If he plead that he

never offended but in this particular inſtance, that is pleading guilty. If a man be indicted for murder, and the fact be proved upon him, and he be found guilty, and the judge paſs ſentence, what would it avail him if he ſhould make this plea, that he had never been guilty of high-treaſon? The judge would obſerve to him, that he was not accuſed of high-treaſon, but of murder, of which he was found guilty and condemned, and his not being a traitor was no reaſon why he ſhould not be executed for being a murderer. So your not having broken this or that commandment cannot ſave you from the juſt ſentence of the law, if you have broken any of them. Suppoſe you are not an adulterer, yet if you are a murderer, you deſerve to die, and to receive the wages of ſin: "for he that "ſaid, Do not commit adultery, ſaid alſo, Do "not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, "yet if thou kill, thou art become a tranſgreſ-"ſor of the law." James ii. 11.

But ſome will ſay, Shall we not be accepted, if we endeavour to keep the law as well as we can? No. The ſtyle of the law is, Do. It does not ſay, Endeavour to keep the commandment, but it ſpeaks with authority, Do it, and do it perfectly, and in every point, and with all the mind, and with all the ſoul, and with all the heart, and with all the ſtrength. Here's no room left for good reſolutions, or good endeavours,

vours, but an actual performance of the whole law is demanded. The leaſt failing or ſhort coming is a tranſgreſſion, and therefore is an abſolute forfeiture of legal righteouſneſs, and of every bleſſing promiſed to the perfect keeping of the law.

Some perſons go a little farther than good endeavours, and think God will accept them for their ſincere obedience. Whereas the law has nothing to do with ſincerity. When you come to be tried by the law, the only queſtion will be, whether you have broken it, or not? If not, the promiſed reward is yours. You may claim it as your due: for to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But if you have broken the law, your ſincere obedience cannot be accepted in the place of perfect obedience: becauſe the law has made no proviſion for your caſe. It requires a continual performance of all its commands, and in a perfect manner; and if you fail, and then plead your ſincerity in your favour, that is owning your guilt, and is a confeſſion of your not having continued in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, and therefore as your ſincere obedience is not perfect, it leaves you ſtill under the curſe of the law, and under the wrath of God.

There are other perſons who think that there is ſome kind of abſolute mercy in God, and

that although they have ſinned, yet he is ready to forgive. But this is not the character of God as drawn in the law; for the law conſiders him as the ſovereign Lord of heaven and earth, having abſolute authority to enact laws for the government of his creatures; over whom he preſides with unerring juſtice to ſee his laws carried into execution. Juſtice is the ruling attribute of the ſupreme law-giver. As his laws are juſt, ſo are its ſanctions. It is equally juſt in him to puniſh tranſgreſſors, as to reward the obedient; for the judge of all the earth cannot but do right, and diſtribute impartial juſtice. Whether he can ſhew mercy to the guilty, is not the queſtion, but whether he has made any proviſion in his law for ſhewing them mercy; and he certainly has not. God is not deſcribed in the law as a God of mercy, but as a ſovereign judge, whoſe wrath, and not whoſe mercy, is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and righteouſneſs of men.

But if the law-giver has made no promiſe in his law, that he will ſhew mercy to ſinners, yet will he not be prevailed on by their ſorrow and tears, their repentance and amendment? There is not one word in the law to encourage a ſinner to hope for mercy, becauſe he is ſorry for his ſin. It is full of threatenings againſt the leaſt offence, and for the leaſt cuts the offender off from all claim to legal righteouſneſs. When he

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is in this ſtate, what merit is there in ſorrow, that it ſhould change the laws of the moſt high God, or what efficacy in tears, that they ſhould cauſe him to be reputed innocent, who is in fact guilty? He has forfeited all right and title to the happineſs which the law promiſed to obedience, and when he ſees this, he grows ſorry for what he has done amiſs. So does a murderer, when found guilty, and condemned to ſuffer; but does the judge pardon him becauſe he is ſorry for his crime? By no means. But he gives ſigns of true ſorrow. He weeps bitterly. Suppoſe he does, yet the law demands obedience, and not tears for diſobeying. Theſe tears flow from a ſenſe of guilt, and if there were rivers of them they could not waſh the ſtain of guilt out of the conſcience: becauſe the law has not aſcribed any ſuch virtue to them, as to accept of many tears for having offended, inſtead of unſinning obedience. And granting he goes a ſtep farther. He repents and amends. But what becomes of the broken law, and of the deſerved penalty? Can ſimple repentance undo the ſin committed? Or can amendment for the future avert the penalty already deſerved? No, theſe are things impoſſible. The law will have obedience or puniſhment, and juſtice is engaged to ſee that the law be obeyed, and the threatened puniſhment inflicted; and therefore, after you have diſobeyed, the law can allow no

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place for repentance, nor no way to eſcape puniſhment, although you ſeek it carefully with tears.

But if the law cannot ſhew the offender mercy, does it leave him without hope? Yes. It can ſhew him no mercy, nor does it give him any hope. It convinces him of ſin, condemns him for it, and ſentences him to the firſt and to the ſecond death.

What! muſt he deſpair then! Of being able to attain mercy by any means in his own power, he muſt deſpair—deſpair of working out for himſelf ſuch righteouſneſs as the law demands---deſpair of eſcaping, by any ſorrow or repentance of his, the puniſhment which juſtice is bound to inflict. And when he finds himſelf in this guilty and helpleſs ſtate, then will he be glad to hear of a Saviour. Bleſſed be God, there is ſalvation for him, who deſpairs of being ſaved by the law. To him the goſpel offers a free pardon. When he flies to the goſpel, ſeeking to be ſaved by free grace, then there is mercy for him, and plenteous redemption. When he cries out, Oh wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the curſes of the broken law, and from the juſtice of an offended God? The goſpel points out unto him the victorious Saviour, who hath redeemed his people from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for them, and hath ſatisfied all the demands of his father's

father's juſtice, having made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs. And therefore he can ſave to the uttermoſt. If there be any of you, whom the broken law accuſes, and whom juſtice is purſuing to inflict the threatened puniſhment, fly to this almighty Saviour, and you will find in him a ſafe refuge. He can ſave you from the condemnation of the law; for there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus. And he can deliver you from the ſtroke of juſtice; for who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, ſince it is God himſelf that juſtifieth them?

This is the great ſalvation ſet before you, who deſpair of being ſaved by the law. It is a free, full, and eternal ſalvation. He who has it to give, has graciouſly convinced you of your want of it, and has made you willing to receive it as a free gift. Aſk it then of him, deeply ſenſible of your unworthineſs, and of your helpleſſneſs, and he will incline his ear unto your petitions: for he never caſt out the prayer of the poor deſtitute. Aſk, and ye ſhall have the precious gift of faith, and great joy and peace in believing that you are redeemed from the curſe of the law, and that you are enriched with the bleſſings of the goſpel. You will be made the children of God, and will receive the adoption of ſons through faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and if ſons, then you will be heirs, heirs of God, and joint

heirs

heirs with Chriſt of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for you: which may the Father reſerve for you all, for the ſake of his beloved Son, through the effectual grace of the Holy Spirit, that to the three perſons in one Jehovah you may be happy in aſcribing equal honour and glory, and bleſſing and praiſe, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

UPON THE

CEREMONIAL LAW.

DISCOURSE III.

UPON THE

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The SONG of SOLOMON, iv. 6.

Until the day break, and the ſhadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincenſe.

AFTER man had broken the moral law, and had fallen into a helpleſs ſtate of guilt and miſery, it pleaſed God to reveal the covenant of grace. As ſoon as the way to ſalvation was ſtopt by the law, he opened a new and living way by the goſpel. The Meſſiah was promiſed, and the rites and ceremonies were inſtituted, which were to repreſent what he was to be, and to do for the ſalvation of men. "Which things "were a ſhadow, but the body, or ſubſtance, was "Chriſt." They were expreſſive figures and ſhadows of his actions and ſufferings, and in them the religion of the goſpel was delineated to the

ſenſes of the believer. This law of ceremonies was revealed upon the fall, and afterwards republiſhed in writing by Moſes. It had God for its author, and was eſtabliſhed by his divine authority, and therefore it deſerves our particular conſideration.

In my laſt diſcourſe I endeavoured to explain the ſcope and deſign of the moral law, and to prove, that, by its works, no fleſh can be juſtified in the ſight of God. The next body of law is the ceremonial, which preached ſalvation from the pains and penalties incurred by the breach of the moral law. It held forth this doctrine under a great variety of types and figures, and taught it in many plain paſſages. The words which I have read contain the Meſſiah's own ſentiments of the ſubject. The commentators allow him to be the ſpeaker, and he is addreſſing himſelf to the believer, with whom he holds ſweet and ſpiritual diſcourſe in this divine treatiſe. He particularly informs them, where he vouchſafed his preſence, and would be found of them that ſought him, ſo long as the ceremonial law was in force. Until the day break, ſays he, until the day of my firſt coming in the fleſh ſhall dawn, and the ſhadows flee away, the types and ſhadows of the law ſhall vaniſh, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincenſe, to the mountain of the Lord's houſe, even to the holy hill of Sion, and

there

there I will be ſpiritually preſent in the temple ſervice; I will there give my bleſſing to the ordinances, and will make them the means of graee: whatever your wants may be, apply to me in theſe inſtituted means, and you will find an abundant ſupply: for, until the day break and the ſhadows flee away, &c.

The conſideration of this paſſage will, I hope, by the aſſiſtanee of God, help us to comprehend the ſeope and deſign of the eeremonial law. And, may the Holy Spirit, who inſpired theſe words, aecompany our preſent meditation upon them, that we may,

Firſt, Clearly underſtand their true ſenſe and meaning, and

Secondly, May be eſtabliſhed in the doctrine which they contain.

There are many parts of the ſong hard to be underſtood, eſpeeially by the unlearned and unſtable, who wreſt it, as they do alſo the other ſcriptures, to their own deſtruction. But the paſſage whieh we have now before us is very eaſy. There is no difficulty in it to perſons who have a little aequaintanee with the ſcripture manner of writing, whieh conſtantly uſes and aecommodates natural things to explain ſpiritual, ſuiting its inſtructions to man's preſent embodied ſtate, in whieh he cannot ſee the things of graee, but through the glaſs of nature. The language of the Old Teſtament is entirely of this kind. Every

Hebrew

Hebrew word has a literal ſenſe, and ſtands for ſome ſenſible object, and thereby gives us a comparative idea of ſome ſpiritual object. As this is the nature of the language, ſo is it alſo of the ſubject matter of the book of Canticles. It is drawn up in the manner of a dialogue, in which outward and material things are uſed to repreſent inward and ſpiritual things. This way of writing is very abſtruſe to them who have not the ſenſes of their ſouls exerciſed to diſcern the things of God, but, to them who have, it is an eaſy book. He who runs may read it, if he has but a little acquaintance with the ſcripture language, and ſome of that love in his heart of which this book treats: for it is a ſong of loves, ſetting forth the mutual affection between Chriſt and the believer, who is united to him by ſaving faith. And, in the words of my text, Chriſt informs the believer where he might at all times find his preſence. He would be ſpiritually preſent in the ſervices and ceremonies of the temple. By theſe he would convey grace and ſtrength to his faithful people, until his coming in the fleſh.

Until the day break. The ſcripture mentions two days by way of eminence, and diſtinguiſhes them by two of the greateſt events, which the Redeemer's love and power are to produce, the day of Chriſt's firſt coming, and the day of his ſecond coming. The day of his firſt coming in the

the flesh is here spoken of—the day which Abraham earnestly desired to see, and which is often mentioned in the prophets under the expressions "of the day of the Lord, or the day of our "God;" and sometimes it is very emphatically stiled "that day," that day's wonders raising it above all days from the beginning to the end of time. And, in the New Testament, our Lord calls it *my* day, the day of my incarnation, when I, Jehovah, should take a body of flesh, and God and man should be one Christ. This day many prophets and kings desired to see; for God manifest in the flesh was the foundation of their faith and hopes. They longed to see this day break, and to behold the sun of righteousness, with his saving and healing influences, arising upon the earth, and, when he did arise, we find those, who were then looking for redemption, singing his praises with grateful hearts, "Blessed "be the Lord God of Israel, through whose "tender mercy the day-spring from on high hath "visited us:" they blessed God, because the substance was now to take place of the shadow, and all the legal ceremonies were to be succeeded by gospel realities. When the glorious day of Christ's appearance in the flesh was come, and the light of life was risen upon the earth, then

The shadows were to flee away. The legal ceremonies are called shadows in scripture, because they were

were the outward and viſible ſigns of inward and ſpiritual objects. St. Paul ſays, the ceremonial law "had the ſhadow of good things to come," Heb. x. 1. of the good things which are now come to us by the advent of Chriſt, and it had the patterns and examples of heavenly things; every one of which had God for its author, and was inſtituted by him to be an apt figure, and to raiſe a juſt idea of ſome ſpiritual object; as Moſes was admoniſhed of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. "For ſee," ſaith he, "that thou make all things according to the "pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount."---Every rite and ceremony was a pattern of ſome heavenly object, the real exiſtence of which the pattern proved, as a ſhadow proves the reality of the ſubſtance from which it is caſt, and the reſemblance and likeneſs of which it ſet before the eyes, as the ſhadow of a body is a repreſentation of it. The ſcripture has expreſsly determined what all theſe ſhadows were to repreſent: for the apoſtle, ſpeaking of them in Col. ii. 17, declares, "that they were the ſhadow of "things to come, but the body is of Chriſt." Chriſt is the reality of all the ſhadows of the law; he is the body, and the ſubſtance, of whom they are the pictures. If you take away their reference to him, they ceaſe to be examples and ſhadows of heavenly things; but, if you ſuppoſe them to repreſent him and

his actions, and ſufferings, &c. then they anſwered many noble purpoſes, until he came in the fleſh to fulfil them: for then theſe ſhadows were to flee away, one great end of their inſtitution being anſwered. The obſervance of them was to be no longer in force; but they were to be entirely repealed and abrogated. However, until this bleſſed day ſhould break, and theſe legal ſhadows ſhould thus flee away, the text ſays, they were to ſerve a double purpoſe; they were, firſt, to be the outward and viſible ſigns of the inward and ſpiritual grace given unto us, and ordained by Chriſt himſelf, to be, ſecondly, a means whereby we receive the ſame, and a pledge to aſſure us thereof. This is plainly implied in the laſt words of the text, in which Chriſt declares, that until the ceremonies were fulfilled by his coming in the fleſh, he would be ſpiritually preſent in them.

I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincenſe. Where was this mountain of myrrh? Was it not the place in which the Lord was preſent, until the ſhadows were fled away? And where was he preſent but in the ſervices of the ceremonial law, which could not be performed any where, when the text was ſpoken, but in the temple? There the Lord had put his name; and had ſanctified the houſe by the preſence of his glory. "I have choſen," ſays the Lord, 2 Chron. vii. 16, "and ſanctified

" this houſe, that my name might be there for " ever, and mine eyes, and mine heart, ſhall be " there perpetually :" there will I receive the ſacrifices which I have forbidden to be offered any where elſe ; there will I accept of the prayers of the faithful offerer ; and there will I dwell between the Cherubim, with viſible tokens of my divine preſence and glory. As he choſe the people of Iſrael out of all the nations of the earth to be his people, ſo he choſe his ſanctuary in Judah, and the holy hill of Sion to be his dwelling place, manifeſting his preſence there in ſuch a manner as he did no where elſe in the world ; and therefore we may infer, that when Chriſt ſays, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, until the ſhadows flee away, he certainly meant the mountain of the Lord's houſe. And the Hebrew word juſtifies this inference : for the word rendered myrrh is the very ſame root with Moriah, the mount upon which the temple ſtood. I will get me, ſays Chriſt, to the mountain of Moriah, and there will I dwell, becauſe I have a delight therein. So that we have here a plain teſtimony of Chriſt's preſence in the ceremonial ſervices performed upon mount Moriah. In theſe he was to be found of them that ſought him, until the day of his manifeſtation in the fleſh. And the meaning of the word ſeems to me farther to confirm this interpretation : for it ſignifies *bitterneſs*, what is bitter to the taſte,

and

and bitter to the ſpirit, grievous and hard to be borne; and what was there to be ſeen or done upon mount Moriah to render this its proper name? Look at the chief part of the temple-ſervice, and then judge. It conſiſted in making gifts and ſacrifices for ſin, in which you may behold a ſtriking picture of the bitter ſufferings of the lamb of God. In the ſacrifices were repreſented every day things more bitter than death, the ſhedding of his blood, and the taking away of his life. He made his ſoul an offering for ſin, and to ſatisfy the infinite demands of law and juſtice. His agony and bloody ſweat, his croſs and paſſion, ſhew what bitter things the Father had written againſt him. Theſe were repreſented in the roaſting of the paſchal lamb with fire, and in the eating it with bitter herbs. And when Chriſt our paſſover, was ſacrificed for us, and really underwent the fire of the Father's wrath, there never was any ſorrow like unto that ſorrow, which forced him to cry out, in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, "My God! my God! why haſt "thou forſaken me?"

If all theſe circumſtances be laid together, they will evidently determine the place of Chriſt's preſence, while the ceremonial law was in force. He was ſpiritually preſent in the temple ſervice, to render the ſacrifices, and the other typical rites, the means of grace, and effectual to the ends for which they were inſtituted: for

after the moral law was broken, there was no way to ſalvation but faith in the promiſed Saviour, and the neceſſity of faith in him was taught by the ſervices of the ceremonial law, as it is written, "through faith they kept the paſs-"over," they acted faith upon Chriſt in the paſſover: they ſlew and roaſted the paſchal lamb with fire, and eat it with bitter herbs, knowing it to be a type of the future ſacrifice of the lamb of God, of the benefits of whoſe death they were then, through faith, partakers. They found his ſpiritual preſence ſtrengthening and refreſhing their ſouls at the paſſover, as we do now at the Lord's ſupper, and they knew, that through his merits and mediation their perſons and their ſervices were accepted to God the Father, which is, I think, the ſenſe of the laſt words of the text.

I will get me to the hill of frankincenſe.

This is the ſame place mentioned before, only deſcribed by another name, to expreſs a different property. Incenſe was, by divine command, a chief part of the temple ſervice. As the ſacrifices offered in the temple were to repreſent the death of Chriſt, ſo the incenſe there offered was to repreſent the ſweet ſavour of his meritorious death, which alone could reconcile God to ſinners, and could render them and their ſervices well-pleaſing in his ſight! and therefore that rich perfume, mentioned Exod. xxx. which was the type of the ſweet incenſe of Chriſt's merits,

was

was forbid, upon pain of death, to be uſed upon any other occaſion, than in the ſervice of God, and in any other place, than in the tabernacle, at that time, and afterwards in the temple. The command is, ver. 36, "Thou ſhalt put of it be-" fore the teſtimony, in the tabernacle of the " congregation, where I will meet with thee: " it ſhall be unto you moſt holy, ver. 58. Who-" ſoever ſhall make like unto that, to ſmell " thereto, ſhall even be cut off from his peo-" ple." This was to ſhew, that God the Father is ſeen to be propitious to ſinners, only through the merits of his Son's ſacrifice, and that he who ſeeks to be accepted in any other way or means, ſhall die in his ſins. The incenſe then was a type of Chriſt's meritorious death, and the hill of frankincenſe was the holy hill of Sion, upon which incenſe uſe to be offered, and a pure offering. The offering was that great ſacrifice of the lamb of God, ſhadowed out by all the ſacrifices ſlain from the foundation of the world; and the incenſe was to repreſent the efficacy of his ſacrifice. It is ſaid of the typical offerings, that the Lord ſmelled a ſweet ſavour; how much more was he pleaſed with the offering and ſacrifice of Chriſt, which was indeed a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour, acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God?

But how was Chriſt preſent in the offering up of the incenſe? It was his inſtitution, and he

was

was ſpiritually preſent to render it effectual to the ends for which he inſtituted it. He appointed it to be one of the means of grace; for he taught believers by this ceremony, that he could make them and their ſervices acceptable to the offended Deity; and, by his Spirit, he gave them the comfortable knowledge of their acceptance. When therefore he mentions his preſence on the hill of frankincenſe, it is as if he had ſaid, When the high-prieſt enters once every year, at the great feaſt of atonement, into the holy of holies, and there fumes the incenſe before the Cherubim of glory, and ſprinkles the blood before the mercy-ſeat, I will then enable believers to act faith upon my future fulfilling and realizing of this ſervice: for, after my ſacrifice upon earth I will enter into the holy of holies, and will there plead my merits before the mercy-ſeat in heaven, and by my all-prevailing interceſſion, will render the perſons and the ſervices of believers well pleaſing unto God the Father. Thus Chriſt was preſent upon the hill of frankincenſe, and there the faithful expected to meet with him! for while the prieſt was offering up the incenſe in the temple, the people uſed to be at prayers without, hoping that the angel of the covenant, who had much incenſe given to him to offer it up with the prayers of all the ſaints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne, would make the ſmoke of the incenſe aſcend up

with

with their prayers before God. In this hope we find the whole multitude of the people (Luke i. 10.) praying without at the time that Zacharias was burning the incenſe in the temple of the Lord.

From the ſenſe and meaning of the words as thus in part opened and explained, the following doctrine may be eſtabliſhed. Upon the breach of the moral law, the ceremonial law was inſtituted to prefigure the promiſed Meſſiah, and his actions and ſufferings, and to preach forgiveneſs of ſins through him. Until the day of his coming in the fleſh, the ceremonies ſerved as ſhadows to raiſe ideas of him, and as means of grace to ſupport the faith and hopes of his people: they were outward and viſible ſigns of inward and ſpiritual grace in the very ſame manner as the ſacraments are at preſent, ſigning and ſealing to believers the benefits purchaſed by the obedience and ſufferings of the lamb of God. This is the doctrine which I purpoſed, under my ſecond general head, to eſtabliſh.

The whole volume of ſcripture conſiders the ceremonial law in this ſame point of view. It was the ſcope and deſign of the Old Teſtament to reveal to ſinners the covenant of grace, and to teach them how they might attain pardon for their breach of the moral law. Upon the firſt breach of it, the Meſſiah was promiſed, and the rites and ſervices of the ceremonial law were inſtituted,

ſtituted, to keep up faith and hopes in him, until his coming in the fleſh; for they ſhewed what he was to be, and to do, and to ſuffer. The New Teſtament relates the accompliſhment of the Old, proving Jeſus of Nazareth to be the promiſed Meſſiah, and declaring how he did and ſuffered every thing prefigured by the types, and foretold by the prophets. Both Teſtaments therefore treat of one and the ſame ſubject, namely of the way and method by which the tranſgreſſors of the moral law may be delivered from the guilt and puniſhment, which they have incurred. This is the opinion of our church in her ſixth article. "The Old Teſtament is not "contrary to the New, for both in the Old and "New Teſtament everlaſting life is offered to "mankind by Jeſus Chriſt." The everlaſting life forfeited by the breach of the moral law, is offered to mankind in the Old Teſtament as well as in the New, and offered by the ſame Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt, and offered by the ſame goſpel of the grace of God: "for unto us, ſays the apoſtle, "(Heb. iv. 2.) was the goſpel preached, as well "as unto them." He is ſpeaking of the Iſraelites, who, after their deliverance from Egypt, periſhed in the wilderneſs through unbelief, and he ſays, that what is preached unto us, was preached unto them. They had the ſame goſpel which Paul preached, and what it was he thus informs the Corinthians, I declare unto you the goſpel which

I preached

I preached unto you, how that Chriſt died for our ſins, according to the ſcriptures, and that he was buried, and that he roſe again the third day, according to the ſcriptures. This is our goſpel, and it was theirs under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation. Believers then had the ſame faith that we have, in the ſame Saviour. The goſpel preached to them the coming of Chriſt, his ſufferings and death for their ſins, and his reſurrection; they believed he would come, and we believe he is come. In this ſingle circumſtance, their goſpel differs from ours. Our reformers, in the ſecond part of the Homily upon faith, ſpeaking of the fathers, martyrs, and other holy men mentioned Heb. xi. have theſe remarkable words: "They did not only know God to be the Lord, "maker, and governor of all men in the world; "but alſo they had a ſpecial confidence and truſt, "that he was, and would be, their God, their "comforter, aider, helper, maintainer, and de-"fender. This is the Chriſtian faith which "theſe holy men had, and which we alſo ought "to have, and although they were not named "Chriſtian men, yet was it a Chriſtian faith that "they had; for they looked for all the benefits "of God the Father, through the merits of his "Son Jeſus Chriſt, as we do now. This differ-"ence is between them and us, that they looked "when Chriſt ſhould come, and we be in the "time when he is come; therefore, ſaith St. "Auguſtine,

" Auguſtine, the time is altered and changed, " but not the faith." Faith was always the ſame. Ever ſince the moral law was firſt broken, there has been but one goſpel, which preached ſalvation by one Lord, and one faith.

If you aſk, How was it preached to the holy men of old? It was revealed to them by many plain prophecies (" for the teſtimony of the " Jeſus is the Spirit of prophecy") and by many ſignificant types and expreſſive ceremonies; under which Chriſt was as clearly preached as he is under the ſacraments of the New Teſtament: for all theſe were memorials, inſtituted on purpoſe to keep him in memory, and they were patterns ſerving as copies to convey ideas of their originals, according to what is written, Exod. xxv. 40. And look, ſays God to Moſes, that thou make them, namely, the tabernacle and all its veſſels, after their pattern, which was ſhewed thee in the mount; they were the patterns of heavenly things, as St. Paul, reaſoning upon this paſſage, has aſſured us, Heb. viii. 5. " Who ſerve unto the example and ſhadow of " heavenly things, as Moſes was admoniſhed of " God, when he was about to make the taber- " nacle: for ſee, ſaith he, that thou make all " things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee " in the mount." Here is a plain deſcription of the ſcope and deſign of the ceremonial law. An infallible interpreter aſſures us, that it ſerved for

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an example and ſhadow of heavenly things. Its ceremonies were examples to ſet theſe heavenly things before men's eyes, and to raiſe ideas of them, and they were ſhadows to delineate them, and to give an outward ſketch of them, and they were patterns like a good plan or deſign, repreſenting them clearly and diſtinctly. This was the nature of the types; they were inſtituted to prefigure the heavenly things which were to be in Chriſt, and which were to be derived from him to believers.

In this ſenſe, Chriſt was preſent upon Moriah. He was there in the types and ſervices. Theſe were his repreſentatives. They ſtood for him, and acted in his name, and by his authority were deputed to declare his gracious intentions towards the tranſgreſſors of the moral law: for they all preached Chriſt, and ſalvation through his infinitely meritorious ſacrifice. The whole temple-ſervice repreſented him in this light: for the temple itſelf was the type and figure of his body. Our Lord himſelf calls it ſo. "Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will build "it up." John ii. 19. But he ſpake, ſays St. John, of the temple of his body, of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. And herein he ſpake agreeably to the well-known uſage of ſcripture, which calls the type and the thing typified by the ſame name. The temple was the type of his body, and every part of its furniture

furniture was a type and figure of what was to be in the humanity of the incarnate God. All its veſſels were apt figures and beautiful pictures of thoſe divine graces which were in him, and which believers were to receive out of his fulneſs. The holy place repreſented what he was to do upon earth, the holy of holies repreſented what he was to do in heaven for his people. At the entrance of the holy place ſtood the laver filled with water, with which the prieſts were to waſh, when they went in and came out of the temple. This was to ſet forth the infinitely purifying virtue which was in Chriſt, and with which he was to cleanſe ſinners from the pollution of ſin, as he ſays in the prophet; "Then will I ſprinkle clean water "upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your "filthineſs and from all your idols will I cleanſe "you." Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Next to the laver ſtood the altar of burnt-offering, on which the blood of the ſacrifice was offered, hereby was repreſented the all-meritorious blood of the lamb of God, which alone taketh away the guilt of ſin. On one ſide of the holy place ſtood the candleſtick, with its lamps always burning, to repreſent that divine light which came into the world, that he who followeth it ſhould not walk in darkneſs, but ſhould have the light of life. On the other ſide ſtood the table of ſhew-bread, the figure of that bread of God, which came down from heaven, and of which, if any man eat,

eat, he ſhall live for ever. At the upper end of the holy place, next the veil, ſtood the altar of incenſe, to repreſent the ſweet ſmelling ſavour of Chriſt's ſacrifice, through faith in which the tranſgreſſors of the moral law are reconciled to God the Father, and rendered acceptable and well pleaſing in his ſight.

The moſt holy place, or the holy of holies, was the figure of heaven, and what was done in it once a year by the high-prieſt, was to repreſent what our great high-prieſt does in heaven for us and for our ſalvation. This doctrine is very clearly taught in ſeveral parts of the epiſtle to the Hebrews. Thus we read that, "into the "ſecond tabernacle went the high-prieſt alone "once every year not without blood, which he "offered for himſelf, and for the errors of the "people. The Holy Ghoſt this ſignifying, that "the way into the holieſt of all was not yet "made manifeſt, while as the firſt tabernacle "was yet ſtanding: which was a figure for "the time then preſent." Heb. ix. 7, 8, 9. And what the Holy Ghoſt ſignified by this ſervice could not but be known, while the tabernacle and temple ſtood, becauſe it was a figure for the time then preſent. The 9th chapter and great part of the 10th, treat entirely of this ſubject. The high-prieſt was the type of Chriſt, our great interceſſor. His going in once a year into the holy of holies was the figure of Chriſt's

appearing

appearing once in the end of the world, and opening a new and living way for us into the holieſt. His carrying blood to ſprinkle upon the mercy ſeat, and incenſe to fume before the Cherubim of glory, was to repreſent Chriſt's pleading the merits of his blood at the throne of grace, which was an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice well pleaſing and acceptable to the Holy Trinity. The high-prieſts coming out of the holy of holies to bleſs the people, was the figure of Chriſt's coming from the holieſt to bleſs his people with an everlaſting bleſſing—"Come "ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom pre- "pared for you from the foundation of the world."

It appears then, from all theſe authorities, that the ceremonial law preached Chriſt, and ſalvation through him from the guilt and puniſhment incurred by the breach of the moral law. All its ſervices prefigured him, and were lively and expreſſive pictures of what he was to be, and to do, and to ſuffer, in order to make an atonement for ſin. His ſacrifice for this purpoſe was repreſented by all the typical ſacrifices: for without ſhedding of blood there was no remiſſion, and it was not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins; therefore believers hoped for remiſſion through his moſt precious blood, and ſacrificed in faith, relying on the future offering of the lamb of God. So that it was plainly the ſcope and deſign of the

ceremonial law to preach remiſſion of ſins through the ſhedding of blood. When any perſon had offended, and his conſcience accuſed him of ſin, he was required to bring his ſacrifice to the prieſt, and to lay his hands upon its head, and to confeſs his ſins over it: after this its life was to be taken away, and its blood ſhed inſtead of the ſinners life. And this was to be done, even when a perſon had offended through ignorance. But in what did the merit of the ſacrifice conſiſt? Did its blood take away ſin? No. It was not poſſible the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould do that. The ſacrifice was only a memorial inſtituted to bring the Meſſiah into mind, as if he had ſaid, Do this in remembrance of me, remembering in every ſacrifice the future ſacrifice of the lamb of God; and believers did remember him. When they ate of the paſchal lamb, by faith they diſcerned the Lord's body, and enjoyed communion with Chriſt, our paſſover, as we do now at the Lord's ſupper. They found him preſent in the ordinances, according to his moſt true promiſe in the text. Until the day dawn, ſays he, the great day of my appearing in the fleſh, and the ſhadows flee away, the ſhadows of the ceremonial law be realized and fulfilled in my life, obedience, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion, until theſe things be, I will be ſpiritually preſent upon mount Moriah, in the temple worſhip, and upon the hill of frankincenſe,

cenſe, to render the perſons and the ſervices of my people well-pleaſing and acceptable unto God the Father.

Since then it was the ſcope and deſign of the ceremonial law to prefigure Chriſt under its expreſſive types and ſhadows, do you, my brethren, look upon it in this light? Are you convinced, that the Old Teſtament contains the goſpel, and the evidence for its doctrines? And have you read it carefully, in order to collect this evidence, and to eſtabliſh yourſelves in your moſt holy faith? Or, inſtead of making this uſe of the Old Teſtament, have you greatly neglected it, ſuppoſing it to contain a religion different from Chriſtianity? This is the opinion of too many among us. But it is very unſcriptural. The New Teſtament is ſo far from being contrary to, that it is in perfect harmony with, the Old. They both preach one goſpel, one Saviour, and one faith: for both in the Old and New Teſtament, everlaſting life is offered to mankind by Jeſus Chriſt. And this life by him was preached by the ceremonies of the Old Teſtament, as well as by the ſacraments of the New, with only this difference, the New is the fulfilling of the Old; the Old Teſtament promiſes the Meſſiah ſhould come and dwell among men, and the New proves that he did come, and that God has been manifeſt in the fleſh. Conſider what has been ſaid at preſent in proof of this point. Weigh

it carefully; and then I hope you will read the Old Teſtament with great pleaſure and profit, finding it teſtifying throughout of Chriſt, and of ſalvation through him.

But what have we to do, may ſome ſay, with the Jewiſh types and ceremonies? Are they not all now repealed and abrogated? Yes. Chriſt has fulfilled them, even to the leaſt jot and tittle; but they ſtill ſtand upon the record to teach us what he was to fulfil. They ſtill continue to bear evidence for Chriſt, although the obſervance of them hath ceaſed; therefore we are ſtill concerned to ſearch what witneſs they bear of him. "Search the ſcriptures, ſays Chriſt, "for theſe are they which teſtify of me." There were no ſcriptures, when he ſpake this, but the Old Teſtament, and it teſtified of Chriſt. It did bear witneſs of him, by its types, for they were ſhadows of good things to come, of which Chriſt is the body, and by its prophecies, for the teſtimony of Jeſus is the ſpirit of prophecy. This teſtimony it ſtill bears, witneſſing to us what Chriſt was to be, and to do, and to ſuffer, as the New Teſtament witneſſes to us that Jeſus of Nazareth was the promiſed Meſſiah: for he was, and did, and ſuffered what the Old Teſtament had foretold. Thus they mutually ſupport each other. The Old Teſtament looks forward to the accompliſhment of its ceremonies and prophecies, referring its readers to ſome perſon, who was to

fulfil the law and the prophets, and the New Teſtament proves Jeſus of Nazareth to be the perſon; and thus all the ſcriptures teſtify of him.

If you aſk in what particular reſpect does the ceremonial law teſtify of him? It conſiders him chiefly in this point of view. The moral law being broken, and the tranſgreſſors of it being under guilt and liable to puniſhment, Chriſt was propoſed to them by the types, as the ſacrifice and atonement for their ſins. All the ſacrifices pointed at his ſacrifice, and the atonement made by them had no merit, but what was derived by faith from his all-perfect atonement: for he was the lamb fore-ordained to be ſlain by the covenant of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, which was made before the foundation of the world, and he was the lamb typically ſlain from the foundation of the world in all the ſacrifices after the fall, and ſlain really in the fulneſs of time, when he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. In this reſpect all the ſacrifices pointed to the lamb of God, referring the tranſgreſſors of the moral law to his moſt precious blood, without the ſhedding of which there could be no remiſſion: becauſe it was not poſſible that the blood of beaſts could take away ſin.

Upon this ſtate of the doctrine there ariſes an important queſtion, in which, my brethren, you are all nearly concerned, namely, Whether you look upon Chriſt in the ſame light that the ceremonial

monial law places him. All the ceremonies pointed to him, and when any one had offended againſt the moral law, the ceremonial law required him to bring his ſacrifice to make an atonement for his ſin: for without ſhedding of blood there was no remiſſion; and thus he was taught to hope for remiſſion only through the ſhedding of the blood of the lamb of God. Now, my brethren, Do you act as the ceremonial law enjoins? Are you convinced of your offences againſt the moral law, and ſenſible of your guilt, and apprehenſive of your danger? Have you put your truſt in the ſacrifice of the immaculate lamb of God? Have you placed all your hopes of pardon on the merits of his moſt precious blood? If not, What beſides can you rely upon? You have ſinned, and the wages of ſin is death. The almighty law-giver has declared, that you ſhall die—"The ſoul that ſin-"neth, it ſhall die." Under this ſentence you lie, as to any thing you can do, either to reſpite it, or to revoke it, until it be executed upon you. Your life is forfeited, and you muſt die the death. And while juſtice ſpares you, how do you reſolve to act? You hear there is a Saviour, and redemption in his blood. He laid down his life, and died to purchaſe life for all tranſgreſſors, who will come unto him for it: either, therefore, you muſt receive life of him, or die. Conſider then ſeriouſly, which of theſe

two is your choice. Which would you have; life or death? If you refuſe to come to Chriſt for life, you muſt die. Your blood muſt be ſhed, and your ſoul muſt periſh: for the Lord God, who cannot lie, hath ſpoken, that without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion, unleſs, therefore, you are ſaved by the blood of Chriſt, there is no remiſſion for you. You muſt die in your ſins.

But if you ſeek to be ſaved by the blood of Chriſt, and deſire the life purchaſed by his death, you have all poſſible encouragement to hope for his favour. He has begun, and he muſt carry on the work. Wait upon him then for his grace in the ways of his appointment, and you will find him ſtill preſent in them. Seek his face in prayer. Hope to find his good Spirit in hearing and reading his word, and continue thus in his ſervice, and he will give you to experience the truth of the doctrine preached by the ceremonial law. All its ſacrifices taught remiſſion of ſin through blood, and all pointed to the bleeding lamb of God, and to his atonement; and, by faith, believers of old received the benefit of his atonement, as we do at preſent: for by faith they kept the paſſover and the ſprinkling of blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born in Egypt ſhould touch them. Wait upon God, and he will enable you alſo to act faith upon Chriſt your paſſover, and when his blood has been ſprinkled upon your heart, the deſtroying angel cannot

then

then touch you. This blood will keep you from death, and from him that hath the power of death. Through faith in it, you will live in the comfortable knowledge of what this ſcripture means, "He that believeth in me, ſays Chriſt, though "he were dead, yet ſhall he live, and whoſoever, "liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die," (John xi. 25, 26.) Happy are they who thus believe and live in him. They have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins, and they are paſſed from death unto life. They know the infinite value of his atonement, not only for the forgiveneſs of their paſt offences againſt the moral law, but alſo for their preſent failings. They want the benefit of his moſt precious blood every day: for all that they do, wants to be cleanſed in the fountain, which was opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs. They are forced to bring their very duties to be cleanſed here: becauſe theſe do not come up to the perfect demands of the moral law. There are ſhort comings in their moſt holy things, for which they want an atonement. Oh how precious then muſt the blood of Chriſt be to ſuch perſons! With what love will their hearts burn towards him? With what gratitude will they ſerve him? How dear will the ordinances be to them, ſince there they find their Lord ſpiritually preſent, comforting ſtrengthening, and eſtabliſhing their hearts. Theſe perſons want no arguments to perſuade them

them to a conſtant attendance upon the ordinances: for they know that they ſhall in them find him, whom their ſoul longeth for, and ſhall in them enjoy ſweet communion with him, until the day of glory break, and the earthly ſhadows flee away. Then they ſhall ſee him face to face, and ſhall be for ever happy with their Lord. Oh that this happineſs may be yours and mine. Grant it, Holy Father, for thy dear Son's ſake, to whom, with the eternal Spirit, three perſons in one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory, praiſe and worſhip, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

UPON THE

LAW OF FAITH.

DISCOURSE IV.

UPON THE

LAW OF FAITH.

DISCOURSE IV.

ROMANS, iii. 27.

Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.

HAVING already conſidered the nature of the moral and of the ceremonial law, I am now to treat of the law of faith mentioned in my text. The moral law is the holy, juſt, and good will of God, to which he required, and does require, perfect obedience: for his will is like himſelf, always one and the ſame without variableneſs, or ſhadow of turning: but there is no ſalvation now to be expected from this law, becauſe all have ſinned againſt it, and are liable to the threatened penalties. Upon the firſt breach of it God was graciouſly pleaſed to reveal the ceremonial law, the deſign and ſcope of which was to point out the promiſed Meſſiah, and to be the means of grace to the people

of

of God: for by its ſervices, which were ſhadows and types of Chriſt, and of the good things to come through him, the eye of faith was kept looking earneſtly upon him, and waiting for the happy time, when the day ſhould break, and the ſhadows flee away, and he ſhould come in the fleſh, to deliver his people from the curſes of the moral law. At the end of 4000 years he came, and having fulfilled the ceremonial law, and accompliſhed every thing ſignified by its typical ſervices, it was then repealed, and the law of faith alone was eſtabliſhed, by which believers have been ſaved from the beginning, and are to be ſaved to the end of the world.

If we take a ſhort view of the Apoſtle's reaſoning in this chapter, we ſhall eaſily diſcover what this law of faith is. He is treating of the corruption of mankind, of the Jews as well as of the Gentiles, and he proves that they are all under ſin: for they have all broken the moral law, and are guilty in the ſight of God, and are thereby become abſolutely incapable of ever attaining inherent legal righteouſneſs. After the moral law has been once broken, it can never afterwards juſtify the ſinner: becauſe it requires perfect uninterrupted obedience, and allows of no failing, no not in thought. Its ſtyle and language is—"Do this, and thou ſhalt "live,"—"If thou tranſgreſs, dying thou ſhalt "ſurely

" ſurely die." And when any one tranſgreſſes, it knows nothing of mercy, nor has made any proviſion for pardon, but calls aloud for juſtice to inflict the deſerved puniſhment. And ſince all men have tranſgreſſed, therefore the Apoſtle concludes, that by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in the ſight of God. Thus every mouth is ſtopped, and all the world is become guilty before God. But now the righteouſneſs of God without the law is manifeſted in the covenant of grace, in which the honour and dignity of the moral law is ſecured, and a wonderful way is revealed, whereby the ſinner may be pardoned, and infinite juſtice may be glorified in ſhewing him mercy. The Lord Chriſt, being God equal with the Father freely covenanted to take man's nature, and in it to act and ſuffer as his repreſentative, to pay the law perfect and infinitely meritorious obedience, and to endure ſatisfactory and infinitely meritorious ſufferings, yea, to bear the wrath, and to die the death, which man deſerved, and thus he wrought out an all-perfect righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all, and upon all them that believe. And this method of juſtifying ſinners by his being made ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him, is thus opened and explained by the Apoſtle in the words going before the text. All have

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ſinned, ſays he, and come ſhort of the glory of God, being juſtified freely by his grace, and if by grace, then it is not by works, but is all a free gift through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus, whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, his blood made the propitiation, and faith applies, and receives it, and thereby declares the righteouſneſs of God for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt. And in this way of juſtifying ſinners, through the righteouſneſs of the Lord Chriſt, God the Father proves himſelf to be juſt, and the juſtifier of him who is of the faith of Jeſus. He vindicates his juſtice, and the honour of his law, and theſe being ſecured, he can then juſtify him that is ungodly, if he believe in Jeſus: for then his faith will be imputed unto him for righteouſneſs.

When the carnal man hears this doctrine, he is apt to take offence at it. He has ſuch a high opinion of himſelf, and of his own boaſted abilities, that he cannot conceive how God ſhould juſtify ſinners by his free grace, without any of their works and merit, and he is ready to aſk, What? muſt I do nothing towards my juſtification? No. You can do nothing: becauſe, while your ſins are unpardoned, you are under ſentence of death. You are dead in law, and you can no more do any act that is good and valid in the court of heaven, than a condemned criminal

can

can do any act that is good and valid in one of our courts of juſtice. What! am I not to work out, ſays he, and to merit ſome part of my juſtification? No, none at all. The ſcripture gives all the glory to God, that it may cut off all boaſting from man; for if God juſtify ſinners freely by faith, without any works, where is boaſting then, ſays the Apoſtle? Man would have room to boaſt, if he was juſtified wholly by his own works, or partly by faith, and partly by his works; if Abraham were juſtified by works he hath whereof to glory; but ſince he is juſtified entirely by free grace, through faith, in the righteouſneſs of another, all boaſting is excluded. By what law? By the law of works? No, by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified, and therefore no fleſh can boaſt: for how abſurd would it be to boaſt of the works of that law, which brings ſinners in guilty, and condemns them? But all boaſting is excluded by the law of faith; for faith receives juſtification freely from Jeſus Chriſt, without any merit or works of man, and therefore is obliged to give all the glory to God; ſo that faith effectually excludes boaſting, and the law of faith, the obligation that a ſinner is under to go out of himſelf for righteouſneſs, and to believe in the righteouſneſs of another, in order to his being juſtified, ſtill farther excludes boaſting; for the Lord God has made a decree, and heaven and

earth ſhall paſs away rather than it ſhall not be carried into execution, that a ſinner ſhall be juſtified no other way, but by faith. This is the law of the moſt high God, which he hath revealed from heaven, that ye believe in him, whom he hath ſent, for righteouſneſs. Under this law we now live, and by it only can we be ſaved, and may he, who teacheth man wiſdom, teach you the nature of it. May he accompany with his grace and bleſſing what I ſhall obſerve from the text,

Firſt, Concerning the law of faith, and

Secondly, In defence of the Apoſtle's doctrine, and

Thirdly, By way of application.

As to the firſt head, the apoſtle has thus explained the law of faith. The moral law is ſtill in force, but there is no ſalvation by it: becauſe it requires perfect uninterrupted obedience, and will not allow of the leaſt failing, no not in thought. If you offend once, you have loſt all claim to legal righteouſneſs for ever; ſo that by the works of the moral law no fleſh can be juſtified, ſince all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God. And as the moral law cannot ſave the ſinner, neither can the ceremonial: for it is now repealed. Chriſt the ſubſtance is come, and has fulfilled all the legal types. Theſe ſhadows of good things are now fled away, and to obſerve them at preſent would be denying that

Chriſt

Chriſt has been manifeſted in the fleſh, and has completed them. And therefore ſince the moral law brings us all in guilty, and condemns us for tranſgreſſing it, and the obſervance of the ceremonial law is now repealed, there remains only the law of faith, by which a guilty ſinner can be ſaved. This way of ſalvation by faith is eſtabliſhed by law. The Lord God has made a decree, and has enacted, by his ſovereign authority, that he who with his heart believeth unto righteouſneſs ſhall be ſaved. This is the great charter of heaven, by which all the divine graces and bleſſings of time and of eternity are conveyed to tranſgreſſors. The law of faith ſays to them, you have broken the moral law, and are under ſentence of condemnation, but behold the lamb of God, believe in him, and you ſhall be juſtified. And thus the law of faith takes a poor ſinner off from working and ſtriving to merit his juſtification, and requires him only to believe what Chriſt has done and ſuffered for him and in his ſtead. It commands him to rely entirely upon the righteouſneſs of the Lord Chriſt for his pardon and acceptance with God the Father. This is the only way of juſtification now eſtabliſhed by law. All other ways are illegal, and are expreſsly forbidden by a divine ſtatute in this caſe made and provided, in which are theſe words—" Therefore we conclude, that " a man is juſtified by faith without the deeds of

" the law," either moral or ceremonial. The moral law is broken and it condemns him, and the ceremonial law is repealed, therefore we conclude, that he cannot be juſtified but by the law of faith; and by this he is obliged and bound to accept of juſtification by believing, and not by working, ſo that, if he ſeek to enter into life, he muſt keep this commandment, he muſt renounce all merit of his works, all righteouſneſs of his own, and accept of the Saviour's righteouſneſs as a free gift, and have it by faith, imputed to him for his juſtification. This is the law of faith, upon which the ſcripture is very full. The Apoſtle has diſcuſſed this point at large in his epiſtles to the Romans and to the Galatians. In the third chapter of the Romans, he proves both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin and guilt, and cannot by any of their own works be juſtified before God; and then he ſpeaks of the manner of their juſtification, which is freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus, whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteouſneſs. In the fourth chapter, he proceeds to illuſtrate this doctrine from the caſe of Abraham, who believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs. Now unto him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth

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the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs, and ſince this is entirely of grace, then it is no more of works; for it is a manifeſt contradiction to maintain, that we are juſtified freely by the grace of God; and yet that the work of man is ſome way needful to merit our juſtification. Is not this ſomething like purchaſing a free gift? Equally inconſiſtent is the grace of God beſtowing freely, and the works of man meriting, righteouſneſs. Man has nothing to do but to believe, and this too is the gift of God's free grace: for righteouſneſs is imputed to him who worketh not, but believeth, even as David alſo deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works, ſaying, Bleſſed are they whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered, bleſſed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute ſin. In theſe ſcriptures our juſtification before God is aſcribed to faith without works. Theſe two, faith and works, cannot ſtand together. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt freely received by faith, is inconſiſtent with man's working in hopes of attaining a righteouſneſs of his own: for he hopes to attain an impoſſibility. The Apoſtle in his moſt excellent ſermon, preached at Antioch, recorded Acts xiii. declares that we cannot be juſtified by the works of the law. After he had finiſhed the argumentative part of his diſcourſe, he makes this application: "Be it known unto

" you, therefore, men and brethren, that through " this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs " of ſins, and by him all that believe are juſtified " from all things, from which ye could not be " juſtified by the law of Moſes," neither by the works of the moral, nor yet of the ceremonial law, ſo that the whole of a ſinner's juſtification is put upon his believing—" All that believe are " juſtified."

I might bring many more paſſages of ſcripture to confirm this doctrine, but they would be needleſs, becauſe it is already abundantly confirmed by the articles and homilies of our church. The title of the eleventh article is,

" Of the juſtification of man.

" We are accounted righteous before God " ONLY for the merit of our Lord and Saviour " Jeſus Chriſt by faith, and not for our own " works or deſervings, wherefore that we are " juſtified by faith ONLY is a moſt wholeſome " doctrine and very full of comfort, as more " largely is expreſſed in the homily of juſtifica- " tion."

In which homily we have theſe words:

" This ſaying, that we be juſtified by faith " ONLY, freely, and without works, is ſpoken " for to take away clearly all merit of our own " works, as being unable to deſerve our juſtifi- " cation at God's hand, and thereby moſt plainly " to expreſs the weakneſs of man, and the good-

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" nefs of God, the great infirmity of ourfelves, " and the might and power of God, the imper- " fection of our own works, and the moft abun- " dant grace of our Saviour Chrift? and there- " fore wholly to afcribe the merit and deferving " of our juftification unto Chrift ONLY, and " his moft precious blood fhedding. This " faith the holy fcripture teacheth us is the " ftrong rock and foundation of the Chriftian " religion; this doctrine all old and ancient au- " thors of Chrift's church do approve; this doc- " trine advanceth and fetteth forth the true glory " of Chrift, and beateth down the vain glory of " man; this whofoever denieth is not to be ac- " counted for a Chriftian man, nor for a fetter " forth of Chrift's glory, but for an adverfary to " Chrift and his gofpel, and for a fetter forth of " man's vain-glory." Thefe remarkable words are in the fecond part of the homily; in the third part we have this paffage:

" The very true meaning of this propofition " or faying, We be juftified by faith in Chrift " ONLY is this; we put our faith in Chrift, " that we be juftified by him ONLY, that we " be juftified by God's free mercy, and the me- " rits of our Saviour Chrift ONLY, and by no " virtue or good works of our own, that is in " us, or that we can be able to have, or to do, " for to deferve the fame, Chrift himfelf ONLY " being the caufe meritorious thereof."

Theſe authorities are very plain and very deciſive. They declare that we are juſtified by faith ONLY without any of our works or deſervings. What words can be more full to the point than theſe are? "We put our faith in "Chriſt, that we be juſtified by him only, and "by no virtue or good works of our own that is "in us, or that we can be able to have or to do "for to deſerve the ſame." And are theſe the words of our eſtabliſhed church? Are they indeed part of one of our homilies? What! does ſhe teach, that no good works, which we can be able to do, deſerve our juſtification? Surely then, my brethren, the law of faith is here with great plainneſs enforced, and you cannot, as good members of our church, refuſe your aſſent to this propoſition, that in the way of juſtifying a ſinner by faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt all boaſting is excluded.

The natural man cannot receive this propoſition, although it comes recommended to him by the higheſt authority. His heart riſes againſt it. To leave him nothing to boaſt of, no work, no virtue to glory in, Oh, it is too humbling to be borne! Scripture may be plain, and our church's comment upon it ſtill plainer, but he cannot allow himſelf to be quite helpleſs. It appears ſtrange to him, that he ſhould have no hand or merit in juſtifying himſelf. His carnal reaſon cannot conceive how this ſhould be, and there-

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fore whenever he hears of juſtification by faith only, he always faſtens the idea of licentiouſneſs to it, and is ready to object, " If this doctrine " be allowed, what a wide door is here opened " for all manner of wickedneſs? At this rate, " men may do juſt what they pleaſe: for if they are " to be juſtified by faith only without works, is " not the moral law hereby made void, and all " obedience to it? Can there be any neceſſity " for their obedience, unleſs they are to merit hea- " ven by it?" The apoſtle was aware of this objection, and has anſwered it in this chapter: " Do we then make void the law through " faith?" Do we repeal the moral law by ſhewing that it cannot juſtify a ſinner? Is this making it void? God forbid. " Yea, we eſta- " bliſh the law." It ſtands eſtabliſhed by faith, and by no other method, that has been revealed from heaven, or can be contrived on earth, as I propoſed to ſhew under my

Second general head, Wherein I was to prove the truth of the Apoſtle's doctrine in my text. The doctrine is this. In the way of pardoning and juſtifying a ſinner, God was willing to ſhut out all boaſting, that the whole glory might be aſcribed to his free grace, and therefore he choſe the law of faith, which obliges the ſinner to acknowledge himſelf juſtly condemned for breaking the moral law, and to rely upon the righteouſneſs of the Lord Chriſt, as the only means of his par-

don and acceptance; for if the ſinner's juſtification had been altogether of works, or partly of faith and partly of works, then he would have had whereof to glory, becauſe he would have done ſomething whereby to merit it; but now that righteouſneſs, which is the matter of his juſtification, being freely wrought out for him, and given to him by ſovereign grace as a free gift, and then apprehended and received by faith only without works, in this caſe all boaſting is utterly excluded. This is the Apoſtle's doctrine, which I will endeavour to eſtabliſh by the following arguments. And,

Firſt, There has been no other way or method diſcovered of eſtabliſhing the moral law after it had been broken, and of repairing its honour and dignity, but by the law of faith. The moral law is holy, juſt, and good. It is the will of the moſt high God, and therefore partakes of the divine holineſs, juſtice, and goodneſs. It is as holy, juſt, and good as God is, and can no more behold the leaſt iniquity than he can; ſo that when all fleſh was become guilty before God, upon account of the breach of the moral law, there could be no longer any ſalvation expected from it; for the decree is poſitive and abſolute ---"By the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be "juſtified."

In what way then, or by what means may they be juſtified, whom the law condemns? As all

all have ſinned, and robbed the law of its glory, it pleaſed God, of his infinite grace, to contrive a way whereby the ſinner might be ſaved, and yet his law and juſtice might be maintained in their full honour and dignity. The Son of God, equal with his Father in every perfection and attribute, undertook to ſtand in the place of ſinners, and, as their repreſentative, to do and ſuffer for them whatever law and juſtice demanded. The Father was well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake, becauſe he knew that his beloved Son would magnify the law and bring honour to his juſtice. When the fulneſs of time was come, and the word was made fleſh, for us and for our ſalvation he wrought out that righteouſneſs, with which his Father was well-pleaſed. His obedience to the moral law was for ſinners, that by the obedience of one many might be made righteous; and he kept the law in all things, continually, perfectly, in thought, word, and deed, in its ſpiritual nature, and in its utmoſt extent.

This obedience was ſuch, that he challenged the enemy to find the leaſt failing in it, John xiv. 30. "The prince of this world cometh, and "hath nothing in me." Yea, he could appeal to the all-ſearching eye of infinite Juſtice for the abſolute perfection of his obedience. Juſt before his ſufferings begun, he ſaid, "Father, I have "finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to

" do." John xvii. 4. The work of his active obedience being finiſhed, he then undertook to ſuffer for ſinners the pains and penalties due to their breach of the moral law. He ſuffered once for ſin, the juſt for the unjuſt; he took their griefs and carried their ſorrows; he was wounded for their tranſgreſſions, and was bruiſed for their iniquities, the chaſtiſement of their peace was upon him, and by his ſtripes they are healed. He bled, he was made a curſe, he died, that, by his death, they might live: for, he who did and ſuffered theſe things was God. He was truly a divine and infinite perſon, ſelf-exiſtent, co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father: for, as our church well expreſſes it, " that which " we believe of the glory of the Father the " ſame we believe of the Son, and of the " Holy Ghoſt, without any difference or ine- " quality." And ſince there is no difference or inequality between the perſons of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, conſequently what the Lord Chriſt did and ſuffered was as infinitely meritorious as if the Father had done and ſuffered it. When the Lord our righteouſneſs ſtood up to pay the law obedience, the dignity of his perſon brought more honour to the law than the obedience of all created beings, angels and men, could poſſibly have done; becauſe their obedience would have been only finite, whereas his was divine and infinite, and they could only have wrought

wrought out a righteouſneſs ſufficient to ſave themſelves; whereas he has brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs to ſave even the ungodly. The prophet Iſaiah, ſpeaking of this ſubject, ſays, xlii. " 21, The Lord is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs " ſake, he will magnify the law, and make it " honourable;" and he did magnify it by completing it. He paid it both an active and a paſſive obedience, in the moſt perfect degree, and eſtabliſhed it in his higheſt honour and dignity; by which means even that juſtice, from which the ſinner had moſt to fear, may now be glorified in juſtifying him; for God may now be juſt, and yet be the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.

The righteouſneſs, which is the ground and matter of our juſtification, is called in ſcripture, " the righteouſneſs of faith," becauſe faith receives and applies it, and " the law of faith," becauſe the ſinner is obliged to accept of this righteouſneſs by faith only, and the manner of his receiving it is by imputation. As Chriſt took our ſins upon him, and was a ſinner by imputation—He was made ſin for us, who knew no ſin, ſo we are made the righteouſneſs of God IN HIM, not righteous in ourſelves inherently, but in him: we are righteous only in him: his righteouſneſs is imputed to us, and made ours by faith, even as Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs. And in this way of juſtifying a ſinner by

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imputed righteouſneſs, the moral law is ſo far from being made void, that it is eſtabliſhed, and the great end of it is anſwered: for the apoſtle "ſays, Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs "to every one that believeth." The end of the law was to juſtify thoſe who keep it; "Do this, "and thou ſhalt live;" but we attain not to this end, becauſe, through the corruption of our nature, we do not keep the law perfectly; but Chriſt fulfilled the law for all thoſe who believe in him, and thereby he became the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth. By believing, we receive his righteouſneſs, and then we anſwer the end of the law. Thus the law of faith does infinite honour to the moral law, and the believer is continually glorifying it; for his language is this---I acknowledge the law of God to be perfectly holy, juſt, and good; it requires nothing but what is for the glory of the great Law-giver, and for the good of his creatures; and no ſatisfaction can be made to its honour and dignity, after it has been once broken, but what is infinitely meritorious, which no ſinner can poſſibly pay. But thanks be to God for the unſpeakable gift of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which, by faith, is mine. His active and paſſive obedience are imputed unto me for righteouſneſs, and I can now give glory to the moral law of God by acknowledging myſelf to be juſtly condemned by it, and by placing my whole

whole truſt and confidence in Jeſus Chriſt, who of God is made unto me righteouſneſs.

Thus the moral law is eſtabliſhed. It was fulfilled in Chriſt, and the end of it is anſwered in believers; from whence it appears, that the law of faith has provided a full ſecurity for the honour and dignity of the moral law, and has magnified it and made it honourable, not only in the way of juſtifying ſinners, but alſo in their walk and converſation after they are juſtified; which is the ſecond argument I ſhall bring in defence of the apoſtle's doctrine.

The law of faith abſolutely excludes all boaſting, and all confidence in our works, but it does not make void the moral law: for although Chriſt does deliver the ſinner, through faith in his righteouſneſs, from the guilt and condemnation of ſin, and thereby juſtify him, yet he does not give him a diſcharge from all obedience to the moral law, but, by many gracious motives, inclines and enables him to keep it. He ſends his good Spirit to enable the juſtified believer to exerciſe all his faculties in paying a grateful obedience to the will of his God.

His underſtanding was before in darkneſs. He knew not the will of God, and therefore formed a very wrong judgment of it; but now the Holy Spirit enlightens his underſtanding, and lets him ſee the goodneſs and equity of all God's commandments. He uſed to think ſome ſins were very

very little and might be eaſily pardoned, and in the commiſſion of others he lived ſecure without any remorſe of conſcience, hoping to make amends by repentance and reformation, and ſome ſorrow and tears. But now the caſe is altered. He ſees the law in its ſpiritual nature and extent, in its holineſs and juſtice, and confeſſes that the leaſt breach of it deſerves everlaſting miſery, and although Chriſt has delivered him from the curſe of the law, yet with his underſtanding he aſſents to its being for God's glory, and for his own intereſt, to walk in the law of the Lord.

And, as the Holy Spirit enlightens his underſtanding to ſee what the law of the Lord is, ſo he takes away the prejudices, and ſubdues the oppoſition, which were in his heart againſt it. The commandments ceaſe to be grievous unto him. The love of God being ſhed abroad in his heart conſtrains him to love God, and to love the will of God: for God and his will are one. He that loves God cannot hate God's will. Love cannot beget hatred. And therefore when the Holy Spirit gives that faith which worketh by love, he then reconciles the believer's will to God's will, and he can truly ſay---Lord, what love have I unto thy law! I ſee the holineſs, and goodneſs, and juſtice of it, my will approves of it, and my affections love it; yea, I love it above gold and precious ſtones. Oh! give me ſtrength that I may keep it with my whole heart. And

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the Holy Spirit does wonderfully ſtrengthen believers in keeping it. He makes them ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: for he ſets their hearts at liberty, and then they run in the way of the commandments. So far then is faith from making void the moral law, that it eſtabliſhes it as a rule of life for the believer, who endeavours, by his holy walking, to glorify it. As he has received Chriſt Jeſus, the Lord, ſo he deſires to walk in him unto all pleaſing: And this he would do, not to procure himſelf a right and title to heaven; for he received that when the Redeemer's righteouſneſs was imputed to him for his juſtification, and gratitude for this ineſtimable gift conſtrains him to love God who ſo exceedingly loved him, and to evidence this love in the way which God has required, and that is in a grateful obedience. This love, which caſteth out all other fear, brings in a filial fear of diſpleaſing his loving Father. He dreads nothing ſo much as ſin, becauſe he knows nothing elſe can offend his Lord and his God; and therefore he would reſiſt unto blood ſtriving againſt ſin. He would rather die than ſin. This fear of offending God influences his whole life and converſation, and keeps him continually watchful, that he may walk worthy of God, who hath called him unto his kingdom and glory.

Upon theſe two arguments we may reſt the truth of the Apoſtle's doctrine in my text. The law

law of faith excludes boaſting, becauſe it excludes all man's work and merit in his juſtification. His keeping of the moral law cannot in the leaſt juſtify him before God, becauſe after he has once broken it, it becomes to him the miniſtration of death and condemnation. In this ſtate Chriſt finds the ſinner, guilty and condemned, under the curſes of the broken law, miſerable and helpleſs. He takes pity on his diſtreſs, and determines to ſave him. With a love truly divine and infinite, he comes from his eternal throne, appears in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and God and man are united in one Chriſt. This was neceſſary in order to his working out in our nature a divine and infinite righteouſneſs for believers, againſt which law and juſtice might have no exception. He attained this righteouſneſs by obeying the law, by ſuffering its pains and penalties, even unto death, and by being put into the priſon of the grave. He was kept there three days, but it was not poſſible he ſhould be holden any longer. On the third day he roſe triumphant from the dead, and thereby demonſtrated that law and juſtice had no farther demands upon him: for they had certainly received full ſatisfaction when they releaſed him out of priſon. The law was magnified infinitely by his obedience and ſufferings, and it is made honourable, whenever a ſinner is brought to ſubmit to be juſtified through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt;

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becauſe he then acknowledges the law to be holy, juſt, and good, allows himſelf to be juſtly condemned by it, and is convinced that no righteouſneſs can ſave him, but what is infinitely perfect. Such is the Redeemer's. The benefit of this he ſeeks, and when he receives it, and it is imputed unto him by faith, he then ſtands juſtified in the righteouſneſs of God which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, and has the Spirit of Chriſt to guide, ſtrengthen, and ſanctify him. This good Spirit enlightens him to underſtand the law, to love it, and gives ſtrength to keep it; and thus by his holy walking the law gets honour: ſo that the law of faith does not make void the moral law, but eſtabliſhes it, both in the juſtification of a ſinner, and alſo in the holy walk and converſation of a believer.

It is evident then, that ever ſince the moral law was broken, there has been but one way, in which a ſinner could be ſaved, and this was the law of faith, which ſtands eſtabliſhed by the ſovereign decree of the moſt high God. He has ſolemnly provided and enacted, that whoever would enter into life muſt believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. Have you then, my brethren, kept this commandment and believed in him? Apply this to your own hearts, and examine them ſtrictly. Do you believe the record which God hath given of his Son? If not, how do you expect to be ſaved? Againſt God's will

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you cannot be ſaved. You cannot reſiſt omnipotence. And his will is, that you ſubmit to the law of faith, and with the heart believe unto righteouſneſs. The moral law condemns you to death for ſinning againſt it, and no tears or ſorrow, no repentance or amendment can repair the injury you have done it, and therefore by it you cannot be ſaved. There remains then only the law of faith. This offers you a free pardon, and obliges you to accept of it upon pain of dying in your ſins. The offer is, "He that "believeth ſhall be ſaved," but oh! how dreadful is the ſentence which follows the kind offer, "He that believeth not ſhall be damned."

Perhaps ſome of you may be convinced of the neceſſity of believing, but you cannot ſee how faith in the righteouſneſs of another can gain your acceptance with God. You think that your works and Chriſt's muſt go together to your juſtification. This is the opinion of too many among us, who will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, but will go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs along with his. Their miſtake ariſes from their ignorance of the moral law; they know not its infinite holineſs, and what its demands are, and from their ignorance of the goſpel, which by the law of faith obliges the ſinner to accept of that righteouſneſs as a free gift, which is to ſatisfy all the demands of the moral law. Such a righteouſneſs Chriſt has wrought

wrought out, and he offers it freely, and the ſinner by accepting it receives juſtification to life He is made alive to God, and then can act and work in ſpiritual duties, but before this, he was dead legally and ſpiritually, dead under the ſentence of the law, and dead to all motions and acts of ſpiritual life. While he lies in this ſtate, he can do no more than a dead corpſe can; but by the gift of righteouſneſs he is legally alive. The ſentence of death is taken away, and he is freely pardoned; and then he becomes ſpiritually alive, and can perform the offices of ſpiritual life. Being made alive at the root, he produces the fair bloſſoms and brings forth the ripe fruits of righteouſneſs. But theſe fruits do not make him legally alive; they only evidence him to be ſo. They are the proper effects and conſequences of his being, ſpiritually alive, as the bringing forth the bloſſoms and fruit prove the tree to have life, but do not give it life. Oh! beware then, my brethren, of the dangerous miſtake of making up a righteouſneſs, which is to be your juſtification to life, partly with your own works, and partly with Chriſt's. Theſe two cannot ſtand together in your juſtification. The prophet ſeparates them entirely, "I will make "mention, ſays he, of thy righteouſneſs, even "thine only," Pſalm lxxi. 16. and yet he had as much righteouſneſs to make mention of as any of the Old Teſtament-ſaints. And the

Apoſtle, whoſe praiſe is in the goſpel for his labouring more abundantly than all the Apoſtles, yet prayed to be "found in Chriſt, not having "his own righteouſneſs which is of the law, "but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, "the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 9.

What! ſhall we not do good works, will ſome ſay? Yes. Work from life, but not for life. You cannot work any thing acceptably, until you who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins be quickened, and when you are made alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, then you will ſtudy to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good word and work.

This careful walking, my Chriſtian brethren, is in a more eſpecial manner incumbent upon you. You are called unto liberty, only uſe not your liberty for an occaſion of ſin: for you are ſtill under the law to Chriſt. Although you are freed from its condemning power, yet it is ſtill a rule for your life and conduct: becauſe it is the holy, juſt, and good will of God your reconciled Father, whom you love, and whom you are exceedingly deſirous of pleaſing. And it is the will of Chriſt, your Saviour, to whoſe image you ſeek to be conformed, and in whoſe ſteps you would gladly tread. And it is the will of the Holy Spirit, who is your guide, your ſanctifier,

and your ſtrengthener: By him being led, you can take up your croſs daily, mortifying ſin, reſiſting the world's allurements, overcoming the temptations of Satan, and ſubduing the riſings of your carnal minds againſt the moral law. Under the teachings of this good Spirit you will be led right, and under his influence you will be enabled to bring forth much fruit. Oh that this Spirit of the Lord may reſt upon you, the Spirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the Spirit of counſel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, that you may always walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. May he help you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things, and ſo to walk before him as to demonſtrate publicly, that you do not make void the law by faith, but do perfectly eſtabliſh it in its full force and vigour. Grant this, holy Father, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake; to whom with thee, and the eternal Spirit, be equal honour, praiſe, and worſhip, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

UPON

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

DISCOURSE V.

UPON

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

DISCOURSE V.

2 COR. V. 21.

He hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.

IT is the great and merciful deſign of the goſpel to acquaint a ſinner, who is guilty and condemned by the holy law of God, how he may be pardoned and juſtified. Every one of us is a ſinner: for all have ſinned, and therefore all of us ſtand in need of pardon, and ought to receive it with thankful hearts as ſoon as the goſpel preaches it to us. But the greateſt part of mankind are not ſenſible of their guilt, nor apprehenſive of their danger. Sin has nothing in it terrible to them. They love it, dream of happineſs in the enjoyment of it, and while this deluſion continues, they ſee not their want of,

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and therefore have no deſire for, the goſpel ſalvation. But when one of theſe perſons awakes and opens his eyes, he is then terrified at the ſight of his preſent ſtate. Sin appears to him in a new light: he finds it to be exceeding ſinful, and the wrath of God revealed from heaven againſt it to be beyond meaſure dreadful. His guilty conſcience alarms him with an awful ſenſe of his danger, and makes him feel ſome of the puniſhment due to ſin, and then he cannot be eaſy, until he know that his ſins may be pardoned, and he cannot be happy, until he has ſome evidence of their being pardoned. Now Chriſtianity is the only religion which can give ſuch a perſon relief: becauſe it alone teaches him by what means he may be pardoned and juſtified, and have peace with God. He may be pardoned freely through the grace of God, and juſtified through the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, whom God the Father hath made ſin for us, although he knew no ſin in himſelf, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him, and being thus juſtified by faith in him, we might have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Although this doctrine be clearly taught throughout the ſcriptures, yet there are at preſent two ſorts of men, who are great enemies to it, and who ſtrive to keep convinced ſinners from the comfort of it; I mean the Papiſts, who go

about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and the Phariſees among us, who will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God. The notion of the Papiſt's concerning merit is the foundation of all their errors. They teach, that Chriſt merited the grace for them, which is in them, and then this grace in them merits their juſtification, and for this inherent grace God doth juſtify them. And thus they make a Saviour of inherent grace, and put it in the place of Chriſt, and give his glory to their own works. But if inherent grace be our righteouſneſs before God, then how does God juſtify the ungodly, who have no grace, or how can he juſtify a man for thoſe graces which are imperfect, and which want the benefit of Chriſt's atonement? Abſurd as this opinion of theirs is, yet they muſt defend it. Their cauſe reſts upon it: for if you take away their doctrine of merit, down falls the whole ſuperſtructure of their ſuperſtition, all their indulgencies, pardons, pilgrimages, maſſes, faſts, penances, and the mighty Babel of man's inventions. When this doctrine was grown to a monſtrous height, it pleaſed God to raiſe up *Luther* and the reſt of the reformers to preach againſt it. Their principle aim and deſign was to overthrow the merit of works, and to eſtabliſh juſtification by faith only, and they ſucceeded. Several nations were converted from the errors of popery, and among the reſt the inhabitants of this iſland. Our fore-

fathers

fathers threw off the Romiſh yoke, and received the pure doctrines of the goſpel; which amidſt our ſeveral changes and revolutions of government have been happily preſerved, until there has been of late years a manifeſt departure from them. Great multitudes of Proteſtants are going faſt back again to Popery, and ſeemingly without knowing it; for it is a received opinion in England, as much as in France, that man's works are effectual and meritorious towards his juſtification before God. This is the fundamental hereſy of the Papiſts, and how many nominal Proteſtants have fallen into it, our enemies can tell. They ſee, with pleaſure, that there is very little appearance of religion left among us, and that ſome of our moſt decent profeſſors are become Papiſts in that leading principle, which ſeparates the Popiſh from the Proteſtant communion.

Things being in this unpromiſing ſtate, the friends of the reformation ſhould beſtir themſelves. They ſhould try to point out the old land-marks. This is more eſpecially incumbent upon the clergy. It is high time for them to hold forth to their people the fundamental doctrines of the eſtabliſhed church, and to warn them againſt the errors of Popery and Phariſaiſm. With this view, I have choſen the words now read for your preſent meditation; and may the Lord give his bleſſing to what ſhall be ſpoken upon

upon them. Oh that he may accompany with the effectual working of his power, what ſhall be ſaid.

Firſt, Concerning Chriſt's unſpotted innocence. He knew no ſin. Yet,

Secondly, God made him to be ſin for us, and

Thirdly, for this reaſon, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.

And firſt, our Lord's fitneſs to be made ſin for us, is here ſet forth by his knowing no ſin. He knew it not in the ſcripture ſenſe of the word. He had no practical knowledge of ſin, either in thought, word, or deed. Speculatively he knew it well, but that could not defile him: for it was the ſin of others which he knew, and hated, and came to put away by the ſacrifice of himſelf. Chriſt was perfectly acquainted with the holy, juſt, and good law of God; he ſaw clearly into the purity and ſpirituality of it, which could not ſuffer the leaſt offence, being as holy, juſt, and good as God himſelf is, and being the copy of his moſt perfect mind and will. In this view our Lord beheld the odious nature of ſin, and the exceeding ſinfulneſs of it. He knew the hatred which the all-pure God had to it, the puniſhment it deſerved, and the everlaſting fire which it had kindled in the nethermoſt hell. No one ever underſtood theſe things ſo clearly as Chriſt did. He ſaw the deſtructive effects of ſin,

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what diſorder it had brought into the world, and to what temporal and eternal evils it had ſubjected the bodies and the ſouls of men. He knew alſo that there was no help upon earth, and that no creature in heaven, of the higheſt order of angels, could deliver any one ſinner from his diſtreſs, and much leſs a multitude; therefore his eye pitied us, and his compaſſion was moved at the ſight of our loſt and helpleſs ſtate. Behold what manner of love he hath beſtowed upon ſuch ſinners as you and me; a love which led him to do greater wonders to ſave, than he had before done to create us: for he, the moſt high God, bleſſed for ever, humbled himſelf to be made man. He, whom angels and arch-angels had been worſhipping from the moment of their creation, took upon him the form of a ſervant, and came to ſave his people from their ſins. Adore, my brethren, and praiſe this infinite condeſcenſion of the incarnate God: for it was for you who believe it by true faith, and for your ſalvation that the word was made fleſh. He was equal to this great work: becauſe he was perfect God and perfect man in one Chriſt, and as ſuch he was abſolutely free from ſin—"he knew no ſin," he knew it not in practice. No ſin, no inclination, no motion, or riſing of ſin ever entered into his heart, and therefore he was pure from the leaſt ſpot or ſtain of pollution.

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The ſcripture is very plain upon this point. Chriſt was known in the times of the Old Teſtament by the titles of the Holy Name, the Holy One, the Holy One of Iſrael, and the prophet Iſaiah ſpeaks of the Lord the redeemer of Iſrael and his Holy One, and when the fulneſs of time was come, that this Holy One ſhould be made fleſh, he was conceived and born without the leaſt taint of corruption, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a pure virgin. Yea, the angel Gabriel pronounced him to be holy before his birth, in the meſſage to the virgin, Luke i. 35. "The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee; and "the power of the higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee; therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall "be born of thee ſhall be called the Son of "God." He was born holy, and ſuch was the life of the holy child Jeſus, as his birth had been. We may ſee clearly how pure he came into the world, from the purity with which he lived in it. How different was his life from ours; he knew no ſin in thought, word, or deed. The prophet ſays, "He had a clean heart," all his thoughts were clean; "He had pure hands," all his actions were pure; "and he had a mouth with-"out guile," no idle, falſe, or ſinful word ever paſſed through his lips. He was altogether holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners. In the law of the Lord was his ſtudy and his delight. He came to glorify it, and by keeping

keeping it in its ſpiritual nature, and in its full extent, with every faculty of ſoul and body, and at all times he made it honourable. He paid it that obedience which it demanded, and continued in all things that were written in the book of the law to do them. Thus in him was no ſin, ſin being the tranſgreſſion of the law. And accordingly we find him challenging his bittereſt enemies upon this point, "which of you, ſays "he (John viii. 46.) convinces me of ſin?" Nay, he went further, and defied Satan himſelf, as well as the Jews, "The prince of this world "cometh, and hath nothing in me," no ſin of mine own to lay to my charge.

From theſe paſſages it plainly appears, that Chriſt knew no ſin. He was a pure and ſpotleſs lamb, holy and without blemiſh; and it was neceſſary he ſhould be ſo: becauſe if he ever had any ſin of his own, he could not have obeyed and ſuffered for the ſins of others. The infinite purity of God's law can paſs by no ſin. Upon the leaſt tranſgreſſion, if it be but a thought or motion in the heart, the law paſſes ſentence and condemns, "Curſed is every one who conti-"nueth not in all things that are written in the "book of the law to do them." And if you continue not to do them, juſtice calls aloud for the inflicting of the threatened curſe, and waits to ſee it fully executed; therefore, unleſs Chriſt had continued to do all things which are written

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in the book of the law, he could not have obeyed and ſuffered for the ſins of others; becauſe he would then have ſuffered for his own, which muſt not be imagined. It would be plaſphemy to ſuppoſe any ſuch thing. When the laſt ſcene of his ſufferings began, he was led like a lamb to the ſlaughter, a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot, ſuch as the ceremonial law required. You know, my brethren, that no creature could be offered in ſacrifice to the Lord, if it had the leaſt blemiſh or deformity. By this type was prefigured the perfect ſinleſs purity, which was to be in the great ſacrifice for ſin. He was to be a lamb without blemiſh, without the leaſt ſpot or ſtain of ſin, either in his nature or in his life, and ſuch an one was the lamb of God. The Apoſtle ſays expreſsly, 1 Pet. ii. 22. "He did NO ſin," and St. John, 1 Ep. iii. 5. ſpeaks to believers, "Ye know, that he was "manifeſted to take away our ſins, and in him "is no ſin:" this was a known and eſtabliſhed truth, that in Chriſt there was NO ſin. If judgment was laid to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet, there would be found in him a perfect conformity to the law. And this his active obedience was neceſſary to prepare him for his paſſive, that having obeyed the law actively he might ſuffer paſſively whatever was due to our diſobedience. And that righteouſneſs, by which we are accounted righteous before God,

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is the effect of his being obedient unto death, of his obedience to the preceptive part of the law, which was his fulfilling the righteoufneſs of the law, and of his obedience to the vindictive part of the law, which was his bearing the curſe of it. His active obedience was abſolutely perfect. He knew NO ſin, and therefore was every way fit and qualified to ſuffer for ſin, " to be made " ſin for us," as the Apoſtle expreſſes it in my text, which words I am, in the ſecond place to conſider.

Although Chriſt knew no ſin, yet he was made ſin. How could that be? How could he be made ſin, who knew no ſin? He was made ſin not practically, but by imputation. He had no ſin inherently in him, but had ſin imputed to him, when the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all. In his own perſon there was no inherent ſpot or ſtain of ſin, or any ſuch thing. He could not touch the pollution of ſin, nor could he practically know its filthy defiling nature. He was not a drunkard, a whoremonger, a thief, or whatever you call a ſinner as ſuch. He neither was a ſinner practically, nor had he ever the leaſt inclination to be ſo: becauſe his will was always in perfect harmony with the will of God. From whence it appears that Chriſt was not made a polluted ſinner, nor yet a guilty ſinner as to the merit and deſert of ſin. In this reſpect he was not capable of being made

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ſin. He did not, as to himſelf, deſerve the puniſhment of ſin, for which he ſuffered. Puniſhment is due to tranſgreſſors, but Chriſt had not tranſgreſſed. Even when he ſuffered, according to St, Peter, he was juſt and righteous in himſelf, (1 Pet. iii. 18.) "Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered "for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt." He was perfectly juſt, and therefore capable of undertaking to ſuffer for the unjuſt, that as no ſuffering was due to him, the merit of what he ſuffered might be imputed unto them. And ſo it was. He freely entered into an obligation to ſtand in the place of the unjuſt, and to undergo the puniſhment due to them, and this with his own conſent the Lord laid upon him, and in this ſenſe he was made ſin for us. He was made ſin in the ſame way that we are made righteous. Now the righteouſneſs by which we are juſtified is not inherent in ourſelves, but it is in Chriſt, and is made ours through God's imputing it to us. In like manner our ſins were not inherent in Chriſt, but imputed to him and laid upon him. He was willing to become our ſurety, and to anſwer for our ſins, and to have them imputed to him, ſo as to be obliged to bear the puniſhment of them, even the wrath and curſe, which, if he had not endured them, would have ſunk every one of us into the pit of hell. But Chriſt his own ſelf bore them in his own body upon the tree. As the ſurety of all that ſhall believe in

him he undertook to anſwer all the demands which law and juſtice had upon them. And he was willing to have all their ſins imputed to him, and placed to his account, that he might ſatisfy for them. Accordingly we read that he was once offered to bear the ſins of many, and that by his own blood he obtained eternal redemption for them. When their iniquities were laid upon him, although he knew no ſin, yet he knew what it was to ſuffer for ſin. He died the death and endured the pains, which were in nature and proportion due to them for their ſins, and for the full ſatisfaction of law and juſtice.

In this ſenſe Chriſt was made ſin; but what would this avail, if he was a mere man? He might be made ſin, and might ſuffer, but not for us. The Apoſtle ſays, in my text, he was made ſin for us. What was effectual to us, muſt be more than human, and could be nothing ſhort of divine. Chriſt's undertakings were too great to be performed by any perſon leſs than the moſt high God. And accordingly the ſcripture teaches us, that Chriſt was Jehovah, the true ſelf-exiſtent God, a co-equal and co-eternal perſon with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and in his perſon God and man were united in one Chriſt. By this perſonal union, what the manhood did and ſuffered partook of the infinite merit of the Godhead. The manhood of Chriſt had no ſin in it, and therefore what it ſuffered for the ſin imputed

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to it, was infinitely meritorious, becauſe he who ſuffered was God as well as man. This moſt wonderful method of bringing many ſons unto glory, was contrived by the ever-bleſſed Trinity, and ſettled by the covenant of grace. God the Son was pleaſed to become their ſurety, and to ſtand up in their nature to act and to ſuffer for them. And what he undertook he could not fail of accompliſhing; for all things are alike poſſible to his almighty power. When he acted for his people, he was God as well as man, his obedience was therefore divine and infinite, and by the merits of it ſhall many be made righteous. When he ſuffered for his people, his ſufferings were of ſuch infinite merit and efficacy, that by his ſtripes they are healed and freed from ſuffering. He took their griefs and carried their ſorrows, that they might never feel them. When he died, and paid the debt to juſtice, which they ought to have paid, he ſoon brought them a diſcharge: for although he was buried and deſcended into hell, yet on the third day he roſe again from the dead, and thereby demonſtrated, that all the ends were anſwered, for which he was made ſin for them.

Here, my Chriſtian brethren, let us ſtop and adore the free love and rich mercy of our Divine Redeemer. He, the moſt high God, bleſſed for ever, condeſcended to be made man for us, and for our ſalvation. O wonderful condeſcenſion!

that there ſhould be any mercy for ſuch enemies and rebels as we have been, and how did he magnify his compaſſion, that when he might in juſtice have deſtroyed us, yet he humbled himſelf and ſtooped down to ſave us! But how great was his humiliation in vouchſafing to take on him the form of a ſervant, and to live in poverty and contempt. Conſidering who it was that became a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief, we ſee the greateſt wonder of all, the depth of his humiliation. He that was the loweſt upon the earth, was the higheſt in heaven. He came down to be made ſin for us, to have our ſins imputed to him, and to anſwer for them to law and juſtice. Accordingly they were laid upon him, and he bore them in his own body on the croſs, and thereby ſaved us from our ſins. Bleſſed, for ever bleſſed be the name of our dear Redeemer. Glory, and honour, and thanks never-ceaſing be to him, who took all our ſufferings upon himſelf, becauſe he could bear that which we could not, and becauſe he could ſatisfy for that in a ſhort time, which we could not in eternity, and who, having thus delivered us from ſin and ſuffering, has righteouſneſs to impute unto us, in which we may ſtand blameleſs at the bar of juſtice. Oh let us praiſe him with our lips and lives, who was made ſin for us, that he might be made righteouſneſs to us, which is the third point I was to conſider.

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He was a ſpotleſs lamb, and therefore capable of being made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him. Righteouſneſs is a perfect conformity to the law and will of God, and without this no man ſhall ſee the Lord: "For the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the "kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9. and we are all unrighteous, becauſe we have all ſinned and robbed God of his glory. The queſtion then is, In what way or by what means can we attain righteouſneſs? Can we attain it by the works of the law? No, it is impoſſible: becauſe, if it was attainable by our own works, then we ſhould be inherently righteous, and ſhould have ſuch a righteouſneſs as the law demands; but the law demands perfect unſinning obedience, which we have not paid it. And upon our failing to pay it, the law pronounces us guilty, paſſes ſentence, and leaves us, as to any thing we can do, for ever under the curſe, it being the irreverſible decree of the almighty law-giver; that ſince all fleſh has ſinned and broken the law, therefore, by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.

But if ſinners cannot be juſtified by any inherent righteouſneſs, what righteouſneſs have they to plead at the bar of juſtice? They have a righteouſneſs abſolutely perfect and complete, called in ſcripture, the righteouſneſs of God, becauſe the Lord our righteouſneſs contrived

and wrought it out. He came into the world, and took fleſh in order to fulfil all righteouſneſs. By his obedience and ſufferings he ſatisfied all the demands of law and juſtice, and paid that immenſe debt which none of us could pay, and hereby he was made of God unto us righteouſneſs: God the Father conſtituted and ordained him to be the perfect righteouſneſs of believers. In him is their righteouſneſs, "Their righteouſneſs is of me, ſaith the Lord." (Iſai. liv. 17.) For Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.

If you aſk how the righteouſneſs of another can be made yours? It muſt be in the ſame way that Chriſt was made ſin. He had no ſin of his own, and yet he was made ſin by imputation; and believers have no righteouſneſs of their own, and yet are made righteous by imputation. Chriſt had no inherent ſin of his own, nor have they any inherent righteouſneſs; but he was made ſin by having their ſins imputed to him, and they are made righteous by having his righteouſneſs imputed to them. The manner of God's proceeding is the ſame in both caſes. When the Pſalmiſt ſays, "Bleſſed is the man to "whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," How is this to be underſtood? Has he no iniquity in him? Yes, he has original and inherent ſin, and if he ſays he has no ſin, he deceives himſelf; but he is a bleſſed man, becauſe the Lord does not

not impute ſin to him, nor charge him with it. So when David deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man to whom God imputeth righteouſneſs; has the man this righteouſneſs in himſelf, and is he inherently righteous? No, but by an act of grace God accounts him righteous, and imputes righteouſneſs unto him, and therefore he is bleſſed. And thus God imputes righteouſneſs to them who believe, not for a righteouſneſs which is in them, but for a righteouſneſs which he imputes to them. As their iniquities were laid upon Chriſt, and ſatisfaction for them required of him, as a debt is of the bondſman, although he had none of the money, ſo is the righteouſneſs of Chriſt laid upon them. In like manner, as their ſins were made his, ſo is his righteouſneſs made theirs. He is ſin for them, not inherently, but by imputation; and they righteouſneſs through him, not inherently, but by imputation.

This is the righteouſneſs in which alone a ſinner can ſtand acquitted at God's bar. There he muſt make mention of this righteouſneſs, even of this only: for none but this can anſwer the demands of the law, and expiate the curſe of it, and this righteouſneſs can be made his by no other way than by God's imputing it to him; which, as it is the great truth held forth in my text, I will endeavour more fully to explain and defend by the following reaſons.

And firſt, the ceremonial law taught this doctrine very clearly. Whenever a perſon had

ſinned, he was to bring his ſacrifice to the prieſt, and to lay his hands upon its head, confeſſing his ſins over it, and then the guilt was transferred to the ſacrifice, and its blood was ſhed inſtead of his. This is mentioned ſeveral times in Leviticus iv. And of the ſcape goat we read, Lev. xxvi. 21. "Aaron ſhall lay both his hands "upon the head of the live goat, and confeſs "over him all the iniquities of the children of "Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their "ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat." All the ſins of the children of Iſrael were paſſed over to the goat, but were they put into the goat, or were they inherent in him? No. This is too abſurd to be ſuppoſed, but they were put upon the goat. And this was a very expreſſive image of our ſins being laid upon Chriſt; for all the ſacrifices repreſented him. As the ſcape goat had imputed to him all the people's iniquities, ſo had Chriſt all his people's iniquities imputed to him; and as the goat did bear upon him all their iniquities, ſo Chriſt did bear all their ſins in his own body upon the tree. What was prefigured by the type, was fulfilled by the reality, when Chriſt ſuffered once for ſin, the juſt for the unjuſt: for then he was made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him. Our righteouſneſs is in him, this is a

Second argument; That righteouſneſs which is our juſtification before God is IN Chriſt. Believers have it not in themſelves. They have not

not an inherent righteouſneſs, wrought out and attained by their own works, but their juſtifying righteouſneſs was wrought out by another, and it is in him. How then can it be made theirs in any other way than by imputation? Muſt it not be transferred to them in the ſame way that their ſins were transferred to him? And how were they transferred to him? They were imputed, not inherent; they were laid upon him, not into him. So his righteouſneſs is in him, as their ſins were in them, and it is imputed, not inherent; it is not put into them, but upon them. Their righteouſneſs is in him, and he is the Lord their righteouſneſs, and conſequently that righteouſneſs for which they are juſtified, cannot be in them; but it is made theirs when God imputes it to them, and they by faith receive it. The manner of receiving it, which is by faith, is the

Third argument I ſhall bring in ſupport of the Apoſtle's doctrine. Faith is the only inſtrument which God is pleaſed to uſe in applying Chriſt's righteouſneſs. The Apoſtle calls it the righteouſneſs of faith, becauſe faith alone is employed in the application of this righteouſneſs. It is never called the righteouſneſs of any other grace, but of faith. We never read of the righteouſneſs of humility, meekneſs, or charity; theſe are of great price in the ſight of God, but they have no office in juſtifying a ſinner. This belongs

ſolely

ſolely to faith: for to him that worketh not, but believeth, is righteouſneſs imputed. It is not by working, but by believing, that ſinners are juſtified. When they are convinced of ſin, find no righteouſneſs in themſelves, hear the dreadful ſentence of the law againſt the unrighteous, and feel in their guilty conſciences ſome of the miſeries which they deſerve, then they are ſtirred up to ſeek for a righteouſneſs in which they may ſtand acquitted before the judgment-ſeat of God. The ſcripture offers to them ſuch a righteouſneſs in Chriſt, and when God enables them to reſt and to rely upon it for their juſtification, they then by faith have peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt their Lord. Thus the convinced ſinner is forced to ſeek a righteouſneſs out of himſelf, and to rely upon the righteouſneſs of another, and how can this be made or accounted his in any other way, than by imputation? How can he be made righteous in Chriſt, but by having Chriſt's righteouſneſs imputed to him?

If theſe arguments be well conſidered, they will, I hope, eſtabliſh the doctrine of the text: for they clearly prove, that God hath appointed the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be the only righteouſneſs of his people. He was made ſin for them, their ſins being laid upon him, as the ſins of the children of Iſrael were laid upon the ſcape goat. And he was made of God unto them righteouſneſs, and their righteouſneſs is in him, not an inherent,

inherent, but an imputed righteouſneſs, and received by faith, which ſubmits to be juſtified by the righteouſneſs of another, and reſts with full truſt and confidence upon it. This is the fundamental doctrine of Chriſtianity, and the direct contrary is the fundamental doctrine of Popery.

At the reformation, the Lord raiſed up faithful witneſſes to bear their teſtimony againſt that reigning hereſy of the Papiſts, which places merit in man's works; yea ſuch merit as to juſtify a ſinner before God; yea, ſtill greater merit, for they maintain, that a man can do more than the moral law requires, and can perform works of ſupererogation, the merit of which may be imputed to another perſon, and yet, at the ſame time, they deny the imputation of Chriſt's merits. The firſt reformers preached boldly againſt thoſe blaſphemies, and that bleſſed ſervant of God, Luther, was bold indeed. He knew well the dangerous tendency of the doctrine of merit, and therefore he principally wrote and preached againſt it, and God gave him great ſucceſs. A ſinner made righteous by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, is, as he uſed to ſay, the doctrine upon which a church ſtands or falls. Upon it our church was eſtabliſhed, and has long ſtood; but do we ſtand upon it now? Are we all champions for the Proteſtant doctrine, or are we in general departed from it? Alas! our enemies can tell, with triumph they tell of the increaſe

of

of the Popiſh intereſt among us. And why does it increaſe? Whence is it that they make ſo many converts? Is it not becauſe our people are not well eſtabliſhed in this Proteſtant doctrine? If it was taught and preached more, our churches would not be ſo empty as they are, nor the maſs-houſes ſo full. Many of our people know not what it is to be a Proteſtant, and therefore they become an eaſy prey to the Papiſts, who are ſo buſy and ſucceſsful in making converts, that they pretend they have on one Lord's day more communicants at the maſs-houſe in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, than we have on the ſame day at all the churches in London. I fear this may be true; but is it not greatly alarming, and ought it not to ſtir up the Proteſtant clergy, to try to put a ſtop to the ſpreading of Popery? But how can they do this more effectually, than by laying the axe to the root, and ſtriking at the doctrine of merit, which is the fundamental error of the Papiſts? Overthrow this, and Popery cannot ſtand. A man cannot be a Papiſt, who believes that his juſtifying righteouſneſs is in Chriſt, and whoever does not believe this, is not a Proteſtant. May the Lord raiſe us up faithful and able men (for we greatly want them) to defend his righteouſneſs againſt them who have eſtabliſhed a meritorious righteouſneſs of their own, and will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God.

But

But beſides the Papiſts, we have other enemies to the doctrine in the text. The careleſs ſinner treats it with great contempt; for he does not ſee its value, nor his own want of it, and therefore he lives eaſy and ſecure in the practice of ſin. The ſcripture has revealed the wrath of heaven againſt all his unrighteouſneſs, but he does not regard the revelation. The law brings him in guilty and condemns him, but he gives himſelf no concern about the threatenings of the law. The goſpel offers him mercy, and its miniſters intreat him to accept of it, but he ſtops his ears. Neither the grace of the goſpel, nor the terrors of the law can prevail upon him. Although he has no righteouſneſs of any kind, yet he lives as if he was in no danger. Oh deluded man! if thou didſt but know thy ſtate, thou wouldſt cry earneſtly to the Redeemer, and ſeek to be accepted in his righteouſneſs. May he take pity upon thee, and ſend his good Spirit to convince thee of ſin, and to convince thee of righteouſneſs.

The formaliſt is another enemy to the doctrine in the text. He will not receive juſtification by imputed righteouſneſs, but will have his own righteouſneſs ſeated on the throne along with Chriſt. He falls into this great miſtake from his ignorance of the perfect nature of God's law, which has made no proviſion for any failing, but for the very firſt paſſes ſentence, "Curſed is

"every

" every one who continueth not in ALL things, " &c." and ſince all have failed, conſequently all are under the curſe, and can never be juſtified by that law which has condemned them. And his miſtake ariſes alſo from his ignorance of the goſpel. He takes the goſpel to be a propoſal of terms and conditions, mitigating the rigour of the law, and ſo he makes Chriſt only a milder law-giver than Moſes, requiring not perfect but ſincere obedience of his creatures. Whereas Chriſt came to redeem us from the curſe of the law, by obeying its precepts, and by ſuffering its penalties, and our righteouſneſs comes to us from him as the fulfiller of the law, and is received by faith without any of our works or deſervings.

If any of you, my brethren, have fallen into this miſtake, weigh and conſider attentively what has been before ſaid upon the moral law, and upon the law of faith, and if you are not convinced, can you aſk God to direct you in the right way? If you can, he has promiſed to give you wiſdom; he will teach you the true doctrine, and will enable you to ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God. But if you are convinced, are you waiting for the precious gift of faith, or have you received it? If you are waiting for it, remember whoſe gift it is. The Holy Spirit alone can work faith in your heart. It requires his power, even that almighty power, which raiſed

up

up Jeſus from the dead. The ſcripture aſcribes to him the office of convincing ſinners of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and of giving them faith to reſt upon it for their juſtification. Look up to him for this bleſſing. Wait in his appointed ways, hoping for it. And when the Spirit ſhall be poured upon you from on high, then you will be juſtified by faith in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever.

Happy are you, my Chriſtian brethren, who have received the righteouſneſs of faith, and knowing whom you have believed. Since Chriſt's righteouſneſs is yours, bring forth its proper fruits, and ſhew publicly, that there is an inſeparable connection between juſtifying faith and ſanctifying grace. By juſtifying faith the believer is united to Chriſt, and receives life from him, as a graft does from the ſtock upon which it grows. By virtue of this union, Chriſt liveth in the believer, and enables him to put forth the proper acts of ſpiritual life, as the ſtock upon which the graft grows ſupplies it with ſap and juices to put forth leaves, and bloſſom and fruit. This is the certain effect of the abiding of a branch in the vine; it will bring forth fruit; and if any one fancy himſelf to be a believer, and neither brings forth, nor is ſeeking to bring forth

forth any fruit, he only deceives himſelf, and the truth is not in him: for whoſoever has Chriſt for a Saviour, will have the Holy Spirit for a ſanctifier, and will bring forth fruit to the glory of God.

See then, my Chriſtian Brethren, that ye value and prize this righteouſneſs, and give it its proper honour, both with your hearts and lives. While you are bringing forth its peaceable fruits, you will continually find the comforts of it. This righteouſneſs is one of the pieces of Chriſtian armour. It is called a breaſt-plate: becauſe it is the proper armour for the vital parts. Your life is always ſafe while you have your breaſt-plate on, you need not fear the terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth by day. Let thouſands fall you are ſafe. You are defended from outward attacks: for although many be the afflictions of the righteous, yet the Lord delivereth him out of them all; and you are kept in inward peace: for the work of righteouſneſs is peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever. In time of ſickneſs this righteouſneſs will be a perpetual cordial. It will not ſuffer the heart to ſink, although the body grows weak and faint; for this breaſt-plate is not only proof againſt the pains of ſickneſs, but alſo againſt the weapons of death. "Righteouſneſs delivereth "from death;" Prov. xi. 4. not by keeping the

juſtified

juſtified perſon from dying, but by keeping him from the fear of the firſt, and from the power of the ſecond death. The righteous man, armed with this invulnerable breaſt-plate, can challenge all his enemies. Who ſhall ſeparate me from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation or diſtreſs, or perſecution or death? Nay, cloathed in the robe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs I ſhall not be afraid to go through the valley and ſhadow of death, nor yet to ſtand at the awful bar of God's infinite juſtice. Why ſhould he fear to ſtand there to be tried? For who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God himſelf that juſtifieth. Who is he then that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again for their juſtification, and in his righteouſneſs they ſhall ſtand holy and unblameable and unreprovable before the judgment-ſeat of God.

Since theſe are ſome of the benefits of having on the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, let us, my Chriſtian brethren, keep it always in uſe. Since we are fighting under the captain of our ſalvation, let us be ever armed with his righteouſneſs; and may we all wear it upon our breaſts, that neither guilt within, nor troubles without, may ever ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord; but may we, in life and death, find the bleſſedneſs of this armour, by its protecting us from the threatenings of the broken law, and from the ven-

geance of almighty juſtice; and may we in time and in eternity live to his glory, who humbled himſelf to be made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him. Grant this, holy Father, for the ſake of thy dear Son, Jeſus Chriſt: to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit, three perſons in one Jehovah, be honour and glory, and bleſſing and praiſe for ever and ever. *Amen.*

UPON BEING

RIGHTEOUS OVER-MUCH.

DISCOURSE VI.

UPON BEING

RIGHTEOUS OVER-MUCH.

DISCOURSE VI.

ECCLES. vii. 16.

Be not righteous over-much.

THE generality of men think it a very eaſy matter to get into heaven. They have never tried in earneſt to get in, and therefore they are not ſenſible of any difficulty. Scripture may ſpeak contrary to their opinion, but they will not hear it. Plain matter of fact may be againſt them, but they will not regard it. They ſit down eaſy and unconcerned about their eternal ſtate, reſolved to enjoy the preſent world, like the fool upon record, "Soul, take thine eaſe, "eat, drink, and be merry," live jovially at preſent. Give thyſelf no trouble about religion, and let not one thought of death diſturb thee. It will be time enough to prepare for eternity at ſome future period. Thus they think and act. Nay, many have arrived at ſuch an abſolute indolence, that they are angry and provoked,

voked, if any one tells them they are certainly in the wrong, and they will not bear it, no, not from their miniſter, whoſe office and duty it is to try to convince them of the neceſſity of ſtriving to get into the kingdom of heaven. But if ſuch careleſs creatures will not hear us, yet they ought to hear him who has the power of life and death, and who ſays, "Strive to enter in "at the ſtrait gate: for wide is the gate, and "broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, "and many there be who go in thereat. Be- "cauſe, ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the "way that leadeth to life, and few there be that "find it." Matt. ix. 13, 14.

As ſoon as theſe great numbers, who are going through the wide gate and in the broad way, ſee any of their acquaintance beginning to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, and to walk in the narrow way, immediately they are offend- ed, and they try to ſtop them with urging the authority of the text—"Be not righteous over- "much"—Why, ſay they, cannot you be con- tent with the religion of your forefathers; you uſed to keep to your church, and you lived as good a life as any of your neighbours, and you was righteous enough, what occaſion is there then for ſo many prayers, and ſermons, and ſacraments? Indeed you carry things too far, and if you do not ſtop in time, you will quite ruin your character.

This

This is their manner of talking to every man, who is determined to ſave his ſoul. As ſoon as he begins to live different from his neighbours, and refuſes to join with them in their way of murdering their time, they mark him out for a preciſe godly fellow. They think he makes more ado about religion than need be, and if, after many trials, they cannot laugh him out of his oddities, they heartily deſpiſe him for an over-righteous fool.

But if the ſame man ſhould be convinced of the great change which Chriſtianity ought to make in him. If he begin to talk of the neceſſity of the new birth, and of the Holy Spirit's beginning and carrying on a ſaving work of grace in his heart, without which, no man is a Chriſtian, more than in name, then worldly men are thoroughly provoked: they cannot bear this enthuſiaſtic ſtuff. But if he inſiſt farther upon the neceſſity of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, without which no ſinner can be accepted and juſtified before God, and that his righteouſneſs is imputed to the ſinner by faith only, without any previous good works; although it be productive of all good works; for they are all the fruits of righteouſneſs: theſe ſeem to worldly men the wild notions of a diſtemper'd brain. If he prove theſe points and enforce them from plain paſſages of ſcripture, they are ever ready to object, What! ſhall we not be accepted if we do all the good we

can,

can, if we do no body no harm, but pay every one his own, and keep ſtrict to our church, and go to the ſacrament, as often as we have time to prepare, is not this being righteous enough? And although we fail ſometimes, as who does not, yet is not God merciful, and will he not for Chriſt's ſake forgive us? Theſe worldly men know of no righteouſneſs, but what conſiſts in outward duties, in a mere outſide conformity to ſome parts of the law. They forget that the law is ſpiritual, reaching to the very thoughts of the heart; and perfect, allowing of no offence, nor offering a pardon for the leaſt, but pronouncing him guilty who offendeth in one point, and under guilt he muſt lie for ever, as to any thing he can do, unleſs he be juſtified freely by grace through the righteouſneſs of the Lord Chriſt. Whoever inſiſts upon theſe things is ſure to be reckoned in the number of the over-righteous, and will certainly have this caution given him—"Be not righteous over-much."

It is certain then, that the meaning of the text is generally miſtaken. Natural men fancy it commands them not to take too much pains about ſaving their ſouls, nor to be ſingularly religious, but to be content to live according to the courſe and faſhion of the world. More than this, is being righteous over-much. Beſides, many ſerious perſons do not underſtand the text, and therefore have not an anſwer ready for their adverſaries,

adverſaries, who are at every turn miſapplying this ſcripture, and putting a wrong ſenſe upon it. The doctrine, which it teaches, ought alſo to be frequently inculcated and enforced, being one of the fundamental articles of our moſt holy faith. For theſe reaſons, I have determined to give the paſſage a particular conſideration, and will endeavour to ſhew,

Firſt, Negatively what the words do not mean;

Secondly, What is their poſitive and preciſe meaning, and

Thirdly, I ſhall bring ſome arguments to prove the doctrine contained in them. And while I am ſpeaking to theſe points, may the Lord God open all your underſtandings clearly to ſee his mind and will in this ſcripture, and prepare your hearts to practiſe the duty which it enforces. May his good Spirit be with us for theſe gracious purpoſes, while I am

Firſt, Shewing what the words do not mean. They are generally underſtood in a wrong ſenſe. People fancy they contain a caution againſt attaining too much of the righteouſneſs which is of the law; whereas that is impoſſible. A man cannot have too much legal righteouſneſs. Let him keep the law always and perfectly, in its ſpiritual nature, and in its full extent, yet he can be but righteous. He does not perform more than the law requires, he only pays it its juſt demands:

demands: for the love of God and the love of our neighbour comprehend the whole law. On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Now we cannot love God too much, nor yet our neighbour, ſince we are required to love him as ourſelves; and therefore if we love God with all the heart and ſoul, and mind and ſtrength, and our neighbour as ourſelves, yet we only do our duty, we do no more than is commanded us, and conſequently we are only righteous, but not righteous over-much. But,

Secondly. The ſcripture declares, there is no man living who ſo perfectly loveth God and his neighbour, as to attain the righteouſneſs which is of the law. All have ſinned, and have thereby robbed God of that love, and his law of that ſervice, which are their due, and all are therefore unrighteous. The Pſalmiſt declares, (Pſalm liii. 1.) "there is none that doeth good," which words the apoſtle cites in this manner, (Rom. iii. 9, 10.) "We have before proved both Jews "and Gentiles that they are all under ſin, as it "is written, there is none righteous, no not one." Now ſince there is none ſo righteous, and much leſs more righteous, than the law requires, conſequently, there can be none, no, not one, righteous over-much.

Thirdly, To this agree the words of our bleſſed Saviour, Luke xvii. 10. "When ye ſhall

"have

" have done all theſe things which are com-
" manded you, ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants,
" we have done that which was our duty to do."

Who does all thoſe things which are commanded him? Not one: for all have ſinned. But ſuppoſing he did, yet he would be only as righteous as the law requires. He would not be righteous over-much, becauſe he would only do that which was his duty to do.

A fourth argument may be taken from hence: That any man living can be over righteous, and do more than the law requires, is a Popiſh tenet, exploded by the whole Proteſtant church, and particularly by the church of England in her 14th article.

Of works of Supererogation.

" Voluntary works, beſides, over and above
" God's commandments, which they (the Pa-
" piſts) call works of Supererogation, cannot be
" taught without arrogancy and impiety: for
" by them, men do declare, that they do not only
" render unto God as much as they are bound
" to do, but that they do more for his ſake, than
" of bounden duty is required; whereas Chriſt
" ſaith plainly, When ye have done all that are
" commanded to you, ſay, we are unprofitable
" ſervants." This article condemns the general interpretation put upon the text, and declares that it cannot be maintained without arrogancy

and

and impiety. To theſe arguments, I will here add a

Fifth, Taken from the character given in this verſe, of the men who would be over righteous, namely, that they thereby deſtroy themſelves; the righteouſneſs which they are ſeeking will bring upon them deſtruction. "Be not righteous over-"much: Why ſhouldeſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" This ſingle circumſtance will help us to determine, what kind of righteouſneſs it cannot be: for it cannot be the righteouſneſs of the law. This promiſes life to him that keeps it—"Do "this and thou ſhalt live," and therefore this cannot be a deſtroying righteouſneſs. Indeed, if after a man has broken the law, he afterwards turns to it for righteouſneſs, and hopes, by his keeping of it, to be made righteous, then he will deſtroy himſelf: becauſe the law promiſes life only to perfect obedience, and threatens to put them, who offend in one point, under the curſe: for he that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all. This indeed is a deſtroying righteouſneſs, oppoſite to which is the righteouſneſs of the goſpel. It is to ſave ſinners from being deſtroyed by the law. It was wrought out for them by the God-man, Chriſt Jeſus, and is imputed unto them by faith, and when they with the heart believe in it, they are then ſaved from deſtruction. Of this ſaving righteouſneſs it is impoſſible a man ſhould have too much. He muſt have all

that

that is needful for his juſtification, and more than he needs he cannot have. He wants righteouſneſs in an infinite degree, ſuch as none can give him but the Lord our righteouſneſs, and without this he cannot be ſaved.

It is evident then that the text ſpeaks of a righteouſneſs, to which if a man truſt, it will deſtroy him, which cannot be the righteouſneſs of the law, for this promiſes life to them who keep it, nor yet the righteouſneſs of the goſpel, for this promiſes pardon and life to them who have broken the law, but believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And ſince it is neither the righteouſneſs of the law, nor of the goſpel, I come now under my ſecond general head, to conſider what is the poſitive preciſe meaning of the text, and what is the falſe pretended righteouſneſs of which it treats.

The context may lead us to the true meaning. In what ſenſe a man is commanded not to be righteous over-much, may appear from the following words, "Neither make thyſelf over "wiſe." How can a man be over wiſe? Certainly he cannot know too much. Knowledge is part of the image of God in the ſoul, as the apoſtle teaches, "The new man is renewed in "knowledge, after the image of him that created "him." (Col. iii. 10.) A man cannot be too wiſe, but he may think and ſpeak of his own wiſdom more highly than he ought, and that is making

making himſelf over wiſe. In like manner, righteouſneſs is part of the image of God in the ſoul, Eph. iv. 24. "And that they put on "the new man, which after God is created in "righteouſneſs." A man cannot poſſibly be over righteous, he cannot do more than the law requires, but he may think and ſpeak of his fancied righteouſneſs more highly than he ought, and that is making himſelf over righteous. It is ſuppoſing him to be what he is not, which is ſelf-righteouſneſs. In this ſenſe Theodore Beza, one of the great lights of the reformation, underſtood the paſſage: for, in his note upon it, he ſays, "Boaſt not too much of thine own righ-"teouſneſs and wiſdom;" he ſuppoſed a man's boaſting of his righteouſneſs was making himſelf righteous over-much; and this is really the caſe. A man cannot poſſibly have too much righteouſneſs, but he may fancy himſelf to be righteous when he is not, and if he ſpeak and act according to his own fancy, then he is one of the over righteous. And

Secondly, The true ſenſe of the words agrees with the context. Strictly rendered, they read thus, "Be not thou a great ſelf-juſtifier," the original word, which is tranſlated righteous, is in the conjugation Hiphil, which in the Hebrew tongue, ſignifies to make righteous, or to juſtify, and being here uſed perſonally, it ſtands for a juſtifier, one who would make himſelf righteous,

and

and he does it to excefs, he juftifies himfelf over-much, pretending to a greater righteoufnefs than he has. This is the meaning of the text, "Be "not thou a great felf-juftifier:" for there is not a righteous man upon earth, who doeth good and finneth not, and confequently there is not one man upon earth righteous enough, much lefs righteous over-much, except in his own proud conceit. And againft this felf-righteoufnefs the text cautions us, adviling us not to think of ourfelves more highly than we ought to think. But granting this to be the meaning of the text, fome will fay, What neceffity was there for this caution. My anfwer to this is a

Third argument, By which the meaning of the words may be fettled. It was always neceffary to give men this caution, becaufe no man can be righteous over-much, and yet men have always been trying to make themfelves fo. It is impoffible to do more than the law requires, and it is impoffible for fallen man to do all that it requires, and yet his pride puts him upon trying impoffibilities. There is a felf-righteous fpirit in him, which leads him to hope he can, by his keeping of the law, attain to fuch a righteoufnefs as God will accept, and for it juftify him. This appears from the hiftory of the Jews in the Old Teftament. Mofes often diffuades them from the opinion of their own righteoufnefs, and the prophets enlarge upon this particular. The

book of Job treats entirely of it, being written profeſſedly to ſhew, that no man could be juſtified before God by any righteouſneſs of his own. Job inſiſts upon it in his debate with his three friends, that his life and converſation had been ſuch, that he could maintain his own ways before God. "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that "God may know mine integrity; for till I die, "I will not remove mine integrity from me. My "righteouſneſs I hold faſt and will not let it go, "my heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as "I live. I am clean, without tranſgreſſion, I am "innocent, neither is there iniquity in me." But he ſoon changed his opinion, after Elihu had found a right indictment againſt him, and charged him with having ſaid, that he was righteous, and ſhould be found ſo, if God was to weigh him in an even balance. Elihu's arguments brought down and humbled his proud ſelf-righteous ſpirit, and he confeſſed, "I have utter-"ed what I underſtood not, things too wonder-"ful for me, which I knew not. Behold, I am "vile, I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and "aſhes." The Lord God knew the temper of the Jews, and that they would be always leaning to ſelf-righteouſneſs, and therefore he left this book upon record to ſilence all the pleas which they ſhould ever make for the ſufficiency of their works towards their juſtification at his bar. How neceſſary this book was, we may ſee

clearly from the great degree, to which a ſelf-righteous ſpirit prevailed in our Lord's time; for then the Phariſees, and all that made a great ſhew of religion, knew of no righteouſneſs, but what they could attain by their own works, and not ſo much by the works of the moral, as of the ceremonial law. They ſuppoſed the obſervance of the ceremonies to be meritorious, and hoped to be made righteous by keeping them ſtrictly. In conſequence of this opinion, the learned doctors, rabbies, and ſcribes, introduced a vaſt number of traditions, and thought that by keeping them with the ceremonies, they ſhould be holier than others, and they condemned our Lord, becauſe he would not practiſe the traditions of the elders, but oppoſed them, and ſaid that they had made the law of God of none effect by their traditions; they had made the moral law of none effect, becauſe they thought to atone for their offences againſt it, by keeping the ceremonial law, which alſo they rendered of none effect, becauſe it was inſtituted to point out the Meſſiah, who was to make an atonement for the ſins committed againſt the moral law. Our Lord often preached againſt the Scribes and Phariſees, and he never ſpake ſuch ſharp words againſt any ſort of ſinners as againſt them, for he ſays, they were farther from the kingdom of God than publicans and harlots. In all his miniſtry, he never made ſuch a ſevere diſcourſe as in the 23d chapter of St. Matthew, where he is expoſing the errors of the

Scribes and Phariſees, and notwithſtanding their many long prayers, and alms, and faſtings, and pains to make proſelytes, and frequent waſhings, and many other ſuch-like things, which they thought made them righteous, yet he ſays to them, "Ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, "how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?" How neceſſary then was the caution in the text to ſuch perſons, who thought themſelves righteous and deſpiſed others, and is it not ſtill neceſſary for thoſe who are ſeeking righteouſneſs by the works of the law? How many thouſands and tens of thouſands are there now in the world, Proteſtants as well as Papiſts, who place righteouſneſs in duties, in living up to the law as near as as they can, in keeping clear of groſs ſins, in going to church, and in hearing and reading the ſcripture, and if they do all this, they then think themſelves ſafe. But there are ſome more ſtrict than theſe who enjoin themſelves a round of duties, ſet forms of prayers and times of faſting, and give many alms, and never miſs the ſacrament once a month; and perhaps have ſome family worſhip; upon which account they think themſelves very good, and can thank God that they are not like other men. If any miniſter dare attack this falſe righteouſneſs, they cry out againſt him, as the Phariſees did againſt Chriſt. If he tell them, that he does not ſpeak againſt what they do, but againſt the motive upon which

which they act, not againſt the thing done, but againſt the end they propoſe in doing it, this provokes them more; becauſe it tends to lay open the rottenneſs of their hearts, which being not cleanſed from ſin, all their outward and pretended righteouſneſs is only like painting a ſepulchre, or waſhing the outſide of a cup, while there is left within all manner of uncleanneſs.

Since then a ſelf-righteous ſpirit has prevailed, and ſtill prevails in the world, the wiſe man's caution has been, and is ſtill neceſſary. He calls to perſons of this temper, who are ſeeking righteouſneſs by the works of the law, and ſays to them, Why will ye try to juſtify yourſelves by your duties? You are attempting an impoſſibility: for the law requires abſolutely perfect obedience which you have not paid. You have ſinned, and you are none of you righteous, no, not one. There is not a righteous man upon earth, that doeth good, and ſinneth not, and conſequently there is not one, who has that unſinning righteouſneſs which the law demands, and without which none can be juſtified by it. Truſt not then to your imperfect obedience. It can only deſtroy you, but ſeek a better righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs of God.

If theſe arguments be carefully conſidered, they will, I hope, lead you to the true meaning of the text. The wiſe man is not ſpeaking againſt the righteouſneſs of the moral law, nor

againſt the righteouſneſs of the law of faith, but he is diſſuading ſinners from ſeeking righteouſneſs by the works of that law, which they have broken, and which condemns them. But truſting to this falſe righteouſneſs they muſt inevitably be deſtroyed; for it is the righteouſneſs of a ſinner, which is a contradiction in terms. It is an unrighteous righteouſneſs. The law knows nothing of it. The righteouſneſs of the law conſiſts in perfect obedience; and one ſingle failing renders the ſinner ever after abſolutely incapable of being made righteous by his keeping the law. This is the doctrine of the text, which, becauſe of the great oppoſition made to it, I proceed to defend under my third general head. And I will only mention two arguments, the firſt taken from the righteouſneſs of the law, and the ſecond from the righteouſneſs of the goſpel.

The righteouſneſs of the law conſiſts in paying it its due, and that is unſinning obedience. Whoever is legally righteous muſt keep the law in its moſt perfect degree, not offending even in a ſingle thought. He muſt continue to do all things always and perfectly, as the law requires, and then it will pronounce him righteous and give him the promiſed life. But who is thus righteous? Not one: for all have ſinned. And how then can any one be righteous over-much? So far from it, no one can be righteous at all, by his keeping the law, after he has once broken it; becauſe it immediately

immediately brings him in guilty and condemns him. Having offended in one point, he has thereby loſt his claim to the righteouſneſs of the law, as much as if he had offended in all, and therefore he cannot be made righteous by the deeds of that law, which has paſſed ſentence upon him, and given him up into the hands of juſtice to ſuffer the firſt and ſecond death. While he lies in this miſerable, helpleſs ſtate, he can no more do any act which is good and valid in law, than a malefactor can under ſentence of death, and yet he is ſo proud as to fancy, that he can merit heaven by his dead works. Poor vain creature, he is ſo full of ſelf, as to think he can do all that the law requires, although he has broken it, and although he can do nothing but ſin, until he be pardoned and believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God: for whatſoever is not of faith is ſin. What great numbers are there among us of this ſelf-righteous ſpirit? Who, becauſe they are ſomewhat ſtricter in their lives than others, and are more conſtant attenders upon ordinances, therefore ſtate to themſelves, and expect you ſhould give them place according to their own fancied rank of merit. They are ſtill proclaiming, as the Phariſees uſed to do, Make way there, ſtand by, I am holier than thou. Againſt this mock righteouſneſs the text is levelled. The deſign of it is to ſtrip the ſelf-righteous of all their borrowed plumes, and to convince

them that after they have broken the law, they cannot be made righteous by a partial keeping of it. The wiſe man would lead them to conſider what the moral law is, how far ſhort they come of the obedience it requires, and how imperfect, yea ſinful, their works and duties are, and thus he would convince them of their want of a better righteouſneſs than their own. The Jews were exceedingly prone to truſt to their own righteouſneſs, and therefore he tried to beat them off from any reliance upon it. When our Lord came, he found them under the influence of the ſame ſelf-righteous ſpirit; and in all his preaching he ſpake with great ſharpneſs againſt the pretended righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees. We have ſtill men of the ſame ſpirit among us, whoſe righteouſneſs does not exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, and yet they hope to enter into the kingdom of heaven. To all ſuch perſons the wiſe man directs his advice, and counſels them not to truſt to their works and duties for a righteouſneſs, in which they may be juſtified before God—"Be not ye great ſelf juſtifiers. Why will ye "deſtroy yourſelves?" Your falſe righteouſneſs will deſtroy you, if you venture to put your trial upon it at God's bar: for he has already decreed, that ſince all have ſinned, therefore by the deeds of the broken law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight.

It is certain then, that the text does not ſpeak againſt the righteouſneſs of the law, nor yet, ſecondly, againſt the righteouſneſs of faith. The law of God is as holy, juſt, and good as he is, and cannot paſs by the leaſt ſin. It has made no proviſion for a pardon, nor given any promiſe to repentance or to amendment; but requires abſolutely perfect unſinning obedience, and upon the firſt offence it puts the ſinner under the curſe, and leaves him in the hands of juſtice to inflict upon him the threatened and deſerved puniſhment. In this ſtate the goſpel finds him, and offers him the righteouſneſs of the Lord Chriſt; but the proud ſinner will not ſubmit to be juſtified by it, until the Holy Spirit preach the law to his conſcience, and convince him of its holy, ſpiritual, and perfect nature, upon which he feels guilt, conſcience accuſes and condemns him, and he ſees no righteouſneſs in his fancied good works to rely upon, but finds he muſt go out of himſelf for a righteouſneſs, in which he may appear before God. Then the Holy Spirit convinces him of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, how infinitely perfect it is, and how ſafely he may truſt to it, and gives him faith to apprehend it, and to apply it to himſelf for his juſtification. And then he no longer goes about to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs, but ſubmits to the righteouſneſs of God. Againſt this the wiſe man cannot caution us. We all want it, and over much of it we cannot have

have. It is the righteouſneſs of God, as perfect as God is, and the divine perſon, who wrought it out by his obedience and ſufferings, humbled himſelf to be made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him. Believers are not only righteous in him, but righteouſneſs, and that the righteouſneſs of God too, againſt which law and juſtice cannot make any exception; therefore of this righteouſneſs, though not of their own, may they boaſt all the day long. The merits of it are their juſtification, the fruits of it are their ſanctification, and when they come to heaven, this righteouſneſs will be their everlaſting robe of glory, and to ſing his praiſes, who cloathed them with it, will be their employment and happineſs for ever and ever. Surely then, the wiſe man's caution in the text was not levelled againſt this all-perfect and glorious righteouſneſs? No. He knew the ineſtimable value of it, and intended to recommend it by detecting that falſe righteouſneſs, upon which ſinners are apt to reſt and ſee not their want of a better. This was his deſign, which having proved and eſtabliſhed by ſeveral arguments, I ſhall only add two or three practical obſervations upon what has been ſaid.

This greatly miſtaken text is, I hope, now ſet right, and the meaning of it is made plain and clear. The wiſe man did not intend to ſpeak againſt the righteouſneſs of the law, nor

againſt

againſt the righteouſneſs of faith, but againſt a falſe righteouſneſs, which was then and is ſtill in the world. How many are there, who, after they have broken the law, think of being juſtified by keeping it better, and hope to make themſelves very good and righteous enough by their works and duties? To every ſuch perſon the wiſe man ſays, "Be not thou a great ſelf-"juſtifier: Why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf?" But very few will take his advice. There is a generation of men, proud and ſelf-righteous, who think their own works can recommend them to God. Although they have ſinned, yet they fancy that duties can atone for ſins. The Jews were much addicted to this error, and the apocryphal books are full of it. In our Lord's time we find the religious among the Jews placing righteouſneſs in works. Our modern Phariſees copy exactly after them, and refuſe to attend to the wiſe man's caution in the text. Theſe over righteous ones make a ſaviour of their duties, and hope to merit heaven by their works; and yet, alas! their works are but few, and theſe very imperfect. Their righteouſneſs is chiefly negative, conſiſting in doing no harm, in not murdering, or ſtealing, or getting drunk, or breaking the commandments outwardly. Then they are what you call very good ſort of people. But if they keep cloſe to their church, and go to prayers on Wedneſdays and Fridays, and on a ſaint's

a ſaint's day, if they have nothing elſe to do; and will not play at cards, or go to the play-houſe on Saturday night before the ſacrament, although they have no objection againſt going on Monday after they received. Oh, theſe are your mighty good people indeed! Who are righteous, if they are not? But if they go to the ſacrament once a month, and uſe the new week's preparation, and follow it ſtrictly; or if they miſs any of the prayers through an engagement in the evening, they will be ſure to ſay them all the next morning; and if they have ſome new book of devotion, out of which they ſay their formal taſk, morning and evening, like the ſtupid Papiſts gabbling over the bead-roll of their Ave-Mary's and Pater-noſters; theſe are our great ſaints: Who ſhall go to heaven, if they do not? Theſe, like their predeceſſors of old, think themſelves righteous and deſpiſe others. Their pride deceives them, and hinders them from ſubmitting to the righteouſneſs of God. They are too proud to ſubmit. The knowledge of the law and the knowledge of themſelves would humble them. But they are ſo ignorant of the law, as to believe that by doing ſome of its duties they ſhall be made righteous enough; and they are ſo ignorant of the plague of their own hearts, as to ſee no neceſſity for an inward change. They cannot be perſuaded but they have very good hearts, and therefore they have

no

no reaſon to pray with the pſalmiſt, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me. Without this clean heart and right ſpirit, they have only the form and outſide of Chriſtians. The life and power is wanting, and Chriſt may ſay to them, as he did to the church of Sardis, "I know thy works, that thou "haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead."

But if this be the caſe, ſome will be apt to ſay, Why need we do any good works, if they be not meritorious? Why need we go to church, and pray, and hear and read the word, and go to the ſacrament, and do good, if all this be no part of our righteouſneſs before God? It certainly is not: "for by grace are ye ſaved, ſays "the apoſtle, through faith: not of works, leſt "any man ſhould boaſt." And to this doctrine the whole Proteſtant church ſubſcribes, and all the Papiſts deny it. The reformers were called Proteſtants, becauſe they proteſted chiefly againſt this blaſphemous tenet of Popery, namely, that works merit towards a ſinner's juſtification before God. This is the grand diſtinction between us and the Papiſts, and yet, alas! this diſtinction is wearing out. What great numbers have we among us, who truſt to their own fancied good works for acceptance with God? In this point, and it is a very leading one, they are perfectly agreed with the Papiſts. They are both great ſelf-juſtifiers, having at leaſt equal, if not ſuperior

rior merit to Chriſt in the matter of their juſtification. Hear the form of a monkiſh abſolution, in which the doctrine of merit is thus taught.

" God forgive thee, my brother, the merit of " the paſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt and of the " bleſſed ſaint Mary, always a virgin, and of all " the ſaints, the merit of thine order, the ſtrict- " neſs of thy religion, the humility of thy con- " feſſion, and contrition of thy heart, the good " works which thou haſt done and ſhall do for " the love of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, be unto thee " available for the remiſſion of thy ſins, the in- " creaſe of deſert and grace, and the reward of " everlaſting life. Amen." What a deal of ſelf-wrought ſtuff is here, the merit of which, inſtead of the merit of Chriſt alone, is ſaid to be available for the remiſſion of ſins? And is it not the ſame with our half Papiſt Proteſtants? Are there not multitudes of them who think that the merit of their church-going, and the ſtrictneſs of their lives, and the merit of their prayers and alms, and other good works, will juſtify them before God, or if they dare not truſt wholly to them, yet they hope Chriſt will ſupply what is in them deficient; but this is mixing grace and works, which the ſcripture will not allow to ſtand together: for if works, wholly or in part, merit our juſtification, then there would be room for boaſting, which God in his way of juſtifying ſinners by the righ-

teouſneſs

teouſneſs of Chriſt has abſolutely excluded, that no fleſh might glory in his preſence, Chriſt being made of God unto ſinners all that they want, even wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and eternal redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Since then Chriſt has made an atonement for ſin, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs, why will you glory in yourſelves, rather than glory in the Lord? Why will you truſt to your own fancied righteouſneſs, ſince nothing but pride could tempt you to glory in it? Your ignorance of Chriſt's righteouſneſs hinders your ſeeing, how infinitely perfect it is, and your own ſelf-ſufficiency will not let you ſubmit to be ſaved by it, and therefore you go about to eſtabliſh your own righteouſneſs. You may work for a time upon this plan, and think yourſelves ſafe. You may lull conſcience aſleep, and deceive yourſelves, and deceive others with your fair outſide. But the cheat cannot laſt long. God ſees your hearts, and the corruption in them is naked and open to him, although you ſtudy to hide it from yourſelves. He has declared of you, although you will not believe him, that you are not righteous: for there is none righteous in himſelf, no not one. This is his ſovereign decree. Oh! that your conſciences may ſubmit to it, and ſeek for a righteouſneſs

neſs which God will accept at his bar. Dreadful will be the time, if you appear there without a complete and infinitely perfect righteouſneſs. Such there is in Chriſt, and in none elſe, and it is offered freely, even to you, ye ſelf-righteous Phariſees. You may receive the free gift of his righteouſneſs, if you will renounce your own. And what is your own? What merit can there be in theſe duties, which are done out of pride, done in ſin, and done in oppoſition to the word of God. If you can reject all dependance upon theſe, the Goſpel offers to you freely the righteouſneſs of God for your juſtification. Oh that he may diſpoſe you to accept of it, that being juſtified by faith, you may have peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, and may live in the comfortable ſenſe and enjoyment of this peace, until you receive a crown of righteouſneſs, which fadeth not away. Grant this, Holy Father, for the all-perfect righteouſneſs ſake of thy beloved ſon Jeſus Chriſt; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, three perſons in one Jehovah, be equal praiſe and honour, and glory and dominion, and power, in time and in eternity. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

UPON THE RIGHT

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

DISCOURSE VII.

UPON THE RIGHT

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DISCOURSE VII.

MARK xii. 28, 29, 30, 31.

And one of the ſcribes came, and having heard them reaſoning together, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, aſked him, which is the firſt commandment of all. And Jeſus anſwered him, the firſt of all the commandments is, Hear, O Iſrael, *the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: This is the firſt commandment. And the ſecond is like, namely, this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf; there is none other commandment greater than theſe.*

OUR bleſſed Saviour had been diſputing with the chief prieſts, and elders, and the Scribes, and after he had ſilenced them, they left him and went their way, But they departed with enraged and malicious hearts, determined to take the firſt opportunity to deſtroy him, and they

ſend certain of the Phariſees and of the Herodians to catch him in his words; theſe hypocrites pretended to believe him to be a faithful teacher of the way of God, and to come to him with no other view than to deſire his opinion upon a very difficult caſe, namely, Whether it was lawful to give tribute unto Cæſar, or not? Our Lord ſolved this difficult queſtion in a manner that aſtoniſhed his very adverſaries; for he knowing their wicked hearts, ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny; and when they brought it, he ſaid, Whoſe image and ſuperſcription is this upon it? And they anſwered, Cæſar's. Then, ſaid he, render therefore to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and to God the things that are God's. As ſoon as he had ſilenced them, certain of the Sadducees came with a caſe out of the law, which they thought he was not able to ſolve; but he preſently ſhewed them, that their error aroſe from their ignorance of ſcripture, and he put them to ſilence. While he was confuting them with the authority of Moſes, the Phariſees were gathered together againſt him, and one of them being a Scribe, learned in the law, having heard him reaſoning with the chief prieſts, then with the Herodians, and afterwards with the Sadducees, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, was willing to try him with a queſtion out of the law. The Scribe aſked him, Which is the firſt

commandment of all. And Jeſus anſwered him, the firſt of all the commandments is, Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, &c. And the Scribe ſaid unto him, Well, maſter, thou haſt ſaid the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but he, and to love him with all the heart, and with all the underſtanding, and with all the ſoul, and with all the ſtrength, and to love his neighbour as himſelf, is more than all whole burnt offerings and ſacrifices. And when Jeſus ſaw that he anſwered diſcreetly, he ſaid unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durſt aſk him any queſtion.

In this paſſage we have the ſum and ſubſtance of vital and practical religion. The firſt and greateſt commandment is the love of God ariſing from the right knowledge of his eſſence and perſonality, and the ſecond is like unto it, namely, the love of our neighbour founded upon the true love of God. There is none other commandment greater than theſe: for upon theſe two hang all the law and the prophets; and ſince theſe two are the greateſt, they therefore deſerve our greateſt attention. Our Lord demands it of us in the text. What he enjoins for the two greateſt commandments we ought to eſteem ſuch, and to ſtudy them moſt, and to practiſe them beſt. To that end let us conſider them carefully, and

may his good Spirit open our underſtandings to comprehend them, and diſpoſe our hearts to love them, and give us grace and ſtrength to practiſe them agreeably to his holy will.

The firſt commandment conſiſts of two parts, the knowledge of God, and the love of God. The true knowledge of God is contained in theſe words---Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord. And the nature and degree of love to God, is thus deſcribed---Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, ſoul, and ſtrength. I ſhall confine myſelf at preſent to the firſt of theſe particulars, purpoſing through divine aſſiſtance to explain and enforce what is laid down in the text concerning the true knowledge of God, reſerving the other parts of the text for ſome future opportunity.

The firſt and chief point in our religious enquiries is, to diſcover what God is. This is the fundamental article, upon which all the reſt depend. We muſt know the nature and perſonality of God, before we can ſerve and love him, and therefore our bleſſed Saviour very properly places the knowledge of God before the love of him. We cannot love what we know nothing of. Ignorance of God cannot poſſibly beget love of him. If there be very dark and confuſed ideas of him in the underſtanding, there cannot be much true love of him in the heart: for which reaſon the text determines and fixes the

proper

proper object of worſhip, before it requires the love and ſervice, which is to be paid him. Our Lord begins with the knowledge of the true God, and does not propoſe any thing new upon this point, but goes to the law and to the teſtimony. He cites a paſſage from Deut. vi. 4. in which the divine eſſence and perſonality are clearly ſtated, "Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our "God is one Lord." This is a command to the whole Iſrael of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, to hearken to what the Lord God ſays concerning himſelf. He calls to them, and requires them to hear him—"Hear, O Iſrael," by which means it becomes a matter of duty, and we are indiſpenſably bound to attend to this revelation of his will. He has not left us at liberty to think what we pleaſe about his eſſence and his perſonality, becauſe he has revealed what we are to believe about both. And it was neceſſary he ſhould do this, becauſe there is no religion without a God, and no true religion without the true God. How ſhould we know what religious ſervice to perform, if we were ignorant of the proper object of worſhip? It being abſolutely neceſſary that we ſhould know God, the knowledge of him is therefore revealed, and ſettled in the firſt part of the greateſt commandment. We are not left to reaſoning about the being of God from the light of nature, or from philoſophy or metaphyſics; but the ſcripture has fixed our creed, and we muſt abide by it; otherwiſe

wiſe we cannot keep the following parts of the text; we cannot love God and our neighbour aright, unleſs we firſt know what God is. Since this a material point in our preſent enquiry, and not thoroughly underſtood, I will endeavour to prove the neceſſity of ſettling the proper object of worſhip, before the worſhip due to him can be paid. It is very certain, there can be no ſalvation without belief in God. An Atheiſt cannot be ſaved. He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is; but the Atheiſt denies his very being, denies that God is, and thereby withdraws all allegiance from him. Now, if a man cannot be ſaved without believing in God, conſequently he cannot be ſaved without believing in the true God: for a falſe God is no God at all, it is a mere idol, a nothing in the world. Whoever pays his ſervice and worſhip to this falſe god is an idolater, and guilty of high-treaſon againſt the ſupreme Majeſty of heaven. If any of you, who owe your allegiance to king George, were to go to Rome and pay it to the Pretender, in what light would the law conſider your proceeding? Would not it try you for a capital offence, and if found guilty, would not it deprive you of your fortune and life? The law of the moſt high God treats thoſe, who withdraw their allegiance from him, in the ſame manner, having already paſſed ſentence upon them, and decreed, that idolaters ſhall not inherit the kingdom of Chriſt, and of God.

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Since then the true object of worſhip muſt firſt be known before we can worſhip him aright, how are we to come to the knowledge of him? This is the next ſtep in our preſent enquiry. And who ſhall determine this point for us? What authority ſhall we abide by? Shall ſcripture or reaſon decide? If ſcripture be judge, its determination is clear. What words can be plainer than theſe are? "Canſt thou, by ſearching, find out God? Canſt thou find out the "Almighty to perfection? No. It is as high as "heaven, what canſt thou do? Deeper than "hell, what canſt thou know? The meaſure "thereof is longer than the earth, and broader "than the ſea," (Job. xi. 7, 8, 9.) entirely out of the reach of our faculties. The reaſon of this is aſſigned in Matt. xi. 27. "No man "knoweth the Son but the Father, neither "knoweth any man the Father, ſave the Son, "and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal "him," no man therefore, be he ever ſo wiſe and learned, knoweth God the Father, but by the revelation of his Son. And to this agree the words of the Apoſtle, 1 Cor. i. 21. "The "world by wiſdom knew not God." The world by ſuch wiſdom, as it could attain, was not able to diſcover the true God.

If theſe teſtimonies of holy writ be not ſuffered to determine the point, it is not becauſe they are of doubtful interpretation: for words cannot ſpeak plainer, but becauſe you would have the matter

matter tried before ſome other judge. Well then, let us hear what reaſon ſays; but we will not hearken to its proud boaſtings of what it can diſcover; we will examine matter of fact, and enquire what it has diſcovered. Did reaſon ever find out God, and did any reaſoners ever find out the almighty to perfection? Who were the men? When, where did they live? In the refined and enlightened ages of Greece? Tell us, ye diſputers of this world, did your Ariſtotle, or any of his followers, with their ſubtle reaſoning, attain to the knowledge of God? It is an undoubted truth, that they did not. And did any of the other Greek philoſophers ſucceed better in their enquiries? No, not one of them. Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe they became fools, and fell into groſs idolatry along with the ignorant vulgar: for they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beaſts, and creeping things. But if the Greeks failed, did not the learned Romans find out God? No, not one of them ever diſcovered what God was. The Roman philoſophers, aided and aſſiſted with all the diſcoveries of the Greeks, yet remained as ignorant of God as they had been. Tully has left us a curious treatiſe upon the nature of the gods, in which he has demonſtrated the apoſtle's propoſition, that the world by wiſdom knew not God:

God: for in this volume, there is not a conjecture or a hint about the nature of the true God. After the fruitleſs enquiries of ſuch a genius, I need not bring any other arguments to prove, that the Romans, with all their learning and refinement, knew not God. Their reaſon was not equal to the taſk. And where ſhall we find greater reaſoners? Did any man ever make a better uſe of his reaſoning faculties than Tully? And yet with all his ſearching he could not find out God. In theſe inſtances we ſee the utmoſt ſtretch of reaſon, and what it can diſcover. Indeed it boaſts great things, and pretends, by the help of metaphyſics, to diſcover the ſecrets of the ſpiritual world; but theſe are vain boaſtings. Matter of fact diſproves them: for there was not one reaſoner in Greece or Rome who diſcovered the true God. Theſe men came the neareſt to the truth, who erected an altar to the unknown God; by which they held forth and expoſed the weakneſs of human reaſon, ſince in one of the moſt famous univerſities of the heathen world the philoſophers worſhipped an unknown God. How weak and groundleſs then are the boaſtings of our modern unbelievers, who pretend to diſcover what God is by the mere dint of reaſon? What have our Arians and Deiſts diſcovered of him? Do they know more of God, than the philoſophers did? No. They have indeed greater helps, but by rejecting them, their

their pride is greater, and their ignorance appears more manifeſt: for they have left revelation, and have invented to themſelves as empty an idol as any heathen philoſopher ever worſhipped. They rejected the Godhead of Chriſt, and of the Holy Spirit, and have imagined to themſelves a god exiſting in one perſon, infinitely extended, filling infinite ſpace, with many other ſuch like chimerical attributes. And this idol, this nothing in the world, is become the faſhionable divinity of our times; but its worſhippers are all traitors. Every act of worſhip paid to this idol is high-treaſon; for by ſuch act, men withdraw their allegiance from the true God, and pay it to what has no more divinity than ſtocks and ſtones. And ought not the ſervants of the moſt high God kindly to admoniſh their fellow creatures of their guilt, when they ſee them ſeduced by this dangerous hereſy? And if the watchmen give them not warning, will they not be partakers with them in their ſins? If we hold our peace, they will periſh, but their blood will God require at our hands. So that as well for the ſake of our own ſouls, as of theirs, we ought to ſpeak plainly upon this ſubject, and bring it to a matter of ſelf-examination. Let each of us put theſe queſtions to himſelf: Is it ſo, then, that there can be no true worſhip or love of God, unleſs it be paid to the true God, have I then the right object of worſhip for my God? How was I

brought

brought to the knowledge of him? for this is the beſt way to diſcover the certainty of what, I think, I know of him. Did I find him out by the light of reaſon? And did metaphyſics help me to find him out to perfection? If I have taken this method, I have been deceiving myſelf, for the world by its reaſon never found out God. Or was I brought to the knowledge of him in this way? Was I convinced of ſin, and humbled under the ſenſe of it, and did I then find myſelf fallen from God, and alienated from the life of God, ſo that I had no means of diſcovering his nature and perfections, but as revealed by his word and by his Spirit? Did I read the word, and pray for the Holy Spirit to open and to explain it, that I might come to the knowledge of the only true God and of Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſent? And am I ſtill in this humble, teachable frame of mind, reading the word, and praying for the teachings of the Spirit of God? If this be your caſe, happy are ye. God has promiſed, and his word cannot be broken. Aſk and ye ſhall have. Aſk and ye ſhall have this great promiſe of the new covenant fulfilled to you, Jer. xxxi. 34. "And they ſhall no more "teach every man his neighbour, and every "man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord: for "they ſhall all know me from the leaſt of them "to the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord." He will teach you the knowledge of himſelf, and

will

will manifeſt to you his eſſence and his perſonality. You ſhall know him as he has been pleaſed to reveal himſelf in the text, in which we have the whole of what is contained in the ſacred volume: for here he declares what his eſſence is, he is one Jehovah, and what the perſons in this one Jehovah are, they are Alehim, Jehovah our Alehim is one Jehovah. This propoſition is one of the deep things of God which he hath revealed unto us by his Spirit, and which contains more than can be written in many volumes. Each word has a rich copiouſneſs, and explains to us many treaſures of divine truth. May that Lord and God, in whom are laid up all the riches of grace and knowledge, open them to you at this time, that you may underſtand the will and mind of the Lord in his great and glorious name Jehovah.

The word tranſlated Lord, is in the original Jehovah, which ſignifies a manner of exiſtence peculiar and proper to the moſt High God. He is the only ſelf-exiſtent eſſence. All other beings owe their exiſtence to his will and pleaſure, and depend on him for life and breath, and all things; but he exiſts by a neceſſity of nature, and this neceſſary exiſtence is the meaning of the word Jehovah. We cannot fully comprehend the idea conveyed by this word, becauſe we are not acquainted with the manner of neceſſary exiſtence. The wiſeſt man upon earth

cannot

cannot deſcribe in what manner any material object exiſts: for the atoms of which bodies are compoſed, fall not under the obſervation of our ſenſes. We know that gold differs from water, but we are ignorant of their conſtituent particles, which make them differ, ſo that we confeſſedly know not the manner of their exiſtence; and the plain reaſon is, gold and water do exiſt in a different manner, but our ſenſes cannot diſcover how their particles or atoms differ. And ſince we know not the manner of the exiſtence of the material bodies with which ourſelves are converſant, how abſurd would it be for any man to pretend to know the manner of the exiſtence of a ſpiritual being? How preſumptuous then would it be for any man to undertake to deſcribe how Jehovah exiſts, and raſhly to affirm that he exiſts in a manner which excludes all perſonality, while this very man does not know the manner of the exiſtence of any one thing in the world. And yet every little philoſopher, who has but juſt learned to reaſon upon the objects which are within his reach, pretends to reaſon about the nature and attributes of God, and every minute infidel undertakes to prove by metaphyſics, and one of them more proud and ignorant than the reſt, thought he could prove *a priori*, that Jehovah exiſts in one perſon, although Jehovah himſelf declares he does not. If theſe men would attend to the

meaning of the name Jehovah, it might correct ſome of their miſtakes. It ſignifies neceſſary exiſtence. Now from whence ſhall we form a perfect idea of this word? We have no ideas but from our ſenſes, and there is no object within the reach of our ſenſes, which exiſts by a neceſſity of nature. All theſe Jehovah hath formed and made: conſequently they can only give us ideas of dependent exiſtence. There is but one Jehovah, the text ſays, and he exiſts in a manner, of which no other thing can give us a perfect idea, and therefore we can have no reaſon to reject the account which God has given us of the manner of his exiſtence, but if we act conſiſtently, we muſt receive and abide by the revealed account, which teaches us that Jehovah is the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, and that this eſſence is one, one Jehovah, but the Alehim, the perſons in Jehovah, are three. There was no doubt in thoſe ancient times about the perſonality, the ſcripture guards moſt the unity of the eſſence, and while it affirms the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be of the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, it, at the ſame time, teaches us that theſe three are one, one in eſſence, but three in perſons.

The perſonality in Jehovah is deſcribed in the text by the word Alehim, which is in the plural number, and acknowledged to be ſo by the Jews as well as Chriſtians, and if they had not owned it, yet the ſenſe of the paſſage would lead us to ſeek for a plural interpretation, becauſe there was

no

no need for a revelation to teach us, that Jehovah our one Alehim is one Jehovah, which is no more than that one is one. But the word Alehim being plural, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being Alehim, it was neceſſary to reveal to us the unity of the eſſence, and to teach us that theſe three perſons were one Jehovah, and therefore being of the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, none is before or after other, none is greater or leſs than another, but the whole three perſons are coeternal together and co-equal. Each of the perſons is Jehovah. The Father is Jehovah, as we read Iſa. lxiv. 8. "But now, O Jehovah, thou "art our Father." The Son is Jehovah, Iſa. xlv. 21. "Who hath declared this from antient time? "Have not I Jehovah? and there is no God elſe "beſide me; a juſt God and a Saviour;" here the Son our Saviour is called Jehovah. And the Holy Spirit is Jehovah, Iſaiah xi. 2. "The "Spirit Jehovah ſhall reſt upon him, the Spirit "of wiſdom and underſtanding, &c."

Each of the perſons is called Alehim. The Father is ſo called, 1 Chron. xxix. 10. "And "David ſaid, Bleſſed be thou Jehovah, Alehim "of Iſrael, our Father, for ever and ever." The Son is Alehim, Iſaiah xlv. 21. "There is no "Alehim elſe beſide me, a juſt God and a "Saviour." The Holy Spirit is Alehim, Exodus xxxi. 3. "I have filled Bezaleel with the Spirit "Alehim," not of the Alehim, the Hebrew is,

with

with the Spirit Alehim, ſo that the Spirit is the Alehim.—Theſe ſcriptures confirm the doctrine of the text, namely, that Jehovah is one, and that in the unity of Jehovah there are three Alehim, which word does not ſignify their manner of exiſtence. Jehovah denotes that, but it is a relative word, deſcriptive of the gracious offices of the eternal three in the œconomy of man's redemption. And neither the perſonality expreſſed by its being plural, nor its meaning, are retained by our tranſlators in the ſingular word God. God is no more the ſenſe of Alehim, than goodneſs is. And if the tranſlators could not find a proper word in our language, they ſhould have given a definition of it in the firſt place they met with it in the Bible, and then have retained the Hebrew name ever afterwards. By their neglect, our people are kept in ignorance of this gracious name, under which Jehovah would have himſelf to be known. It belongs to the covenant of grace, and is deſcriptive of the acts and offices of the eternal three in the glorious plan of man's ſalvation, and it ſignifies the binding act of the covenant, the obligation entered into upon oath to fulfil it. This is the ſenſe of Aleh, the root from whence Alehim is derived, and there is no other root from whence it can be derived, without offering great violence to the eſtabliſhed rules of the Hebrew tongue. The oath of God is often mentioned

mentioned in ſcripture, and the people's entering into it is beautifully deſcribed, Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. "Ye ſtand this day all of you before "the Lord your God, your captains of your "tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all "the men of Iſrael, your little ones, your wives, "and thy ſtranger that is in thy camp, from "the hewer of wood unto the drawer of water, "that thou ſhouldeſt enter into covenant with "the Lord thy God, and into his oath." God is here ſaid to have made an oath, emphatically ſtiled his oath, becauſe it was the oath of the covenant from whence the name Alehim is taken.

If you aſk, when was this covenant made by oath, and by whom, and for what end? The ſcripture anſwers thoſe points very clearly.

The covenant was made before the world began, as Titus i. 2. "In hope of eternal life "which God that cannot lie promiſed before "the world began." Was not this promiſe the oath of the covenant? What elſe could it be? God, who cannot lie, promiſed before the world began, and fore-ordained (as 1 Peter i. 20) that Chriſt ſhould be the lamb, who ſhould take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. This was fore-ordained by an eternal purpoſe, which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, Eph. iii. 11. What is called in the ſcriptures the purpoſe, the promiſe, and fore-ordination of God, was the covenant of grace which was made before the

world began, yea, by an eternal purpoſe, and from which the divine perſons who confirmed this covenant by an oath, are called Alehim, and as the covenant was made before the world began, they therefore took their name from it, and are deſcribed by it before the creation in the firſt chapter of Geneſis. They had done ſome act before, from which this name was taken. Now it ſignifies to confirm any thing by oath, therefore they had confirmed ſomething by oath before the world began; and what it was theſe ſcriptures determine, which ſpeak of the purpoſe, counſel, promiſe, and fore-ordination of God made before all worlds, to bring many ſons unto glory by Jeſus Chriſt. This was the deſign of the purpoſe, counſel, &c. and the perſons who deſigned this, are the three in Jehovah: for each of them is called Jehovah, and each of them is called Alehim, becauſe each perſon in Jehovah had a diſtinct office in the œconomy of the covenant. The Father undertook to demand full ſatisfaction for ſin; therefore he is called a jealous God and a conſuming fire. Chriſt undertook to pay this ſatisfaction, and is therefore called God the Saviour, and the Holy Spirit covenanted to apply and to render effectual the benefit of Chriſt's ſatisfaction to believers; and therefore his conſtant name is Spirit, which word ſignifies the air that we breath, on which our animal life depends, as our ſpiritual life does on his inſpiration. Now ſince the di-

vine perſons have entered into a covenant, and do ſuſtain thoſe diſtinct offices in it, and ſince our ſalvation depends upon the knowledge of theſe truths, was it not an act of infinite love and condeſcenſion for the divine perſons in Jehovah to take the gracious name of Alehim, and to reveal themſelves to us, as perſons bound by the obligation of an oath to carry the covenant of grace into execution?

If you aſk, what neceſſity there was for this oath? It was neceſſary only on our parts, and it was an act of aſtoniſhing mercy, and will demand our everlaſting tribute of praiſe, that God would vouchſafe to give convinced ſinners ſuch encouragement to hope for mercy, as to bind himſelf by two immutable things to ſave them. The Apoſtle, Heb. vi. 16, 17, 18, thus ſpeaks of this wonderful inſtance of God's love. "An "oath for confirmation is among men an end of "all ſtrife; wherein God, willing more abun-"dantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the "immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an "oath, that by two immutable things, in which "it was impoſſible for God to lie, we might have "a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge "to lay hold of the hope ſet before us." In this ſcripture the Apoſtle deſcribes the counſel, or the covenant of God to have ſinners, and this was confirmed by an oath; and the reaſon of the oath, was for the ſake of the heirs of promiſe,

that they might have two immutable things to reſt their faith upon, namely, the immutable counſel and the immutable oath of God, and theſe ought to ſilence all doubts in the heirs of promiſe, becauſe it is impoſſible that either of them ſhould be broken.

Theſe authorities may ſuffice to determine the meaning of the divine name Alehim. It is expreſſive of the perſonality in Jehovah, and denotes what the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the three Alehim, have covenanted upon oath to do for the ſalvation of ſinners. Alehim ſignifies the Trinity in covenant, and particularly expreſſes the oath, which was the binding act of the covenant, and thereby it denotes the moſt merciful relation, in which divine love could manifeſt itſelf; a relation productive of the richeſt bleſſings of time and of eternity. Jehovah is a name of majeſty and greatneſs. Alehim is a name of grace and mercy. Jehovah expreſſes the ſelf-exiſtence of the Godhead, and the infinite difference between his manner of exiſting and that of his dependent creatures, and after they had ſinned it was to them a name of terror. Whereas Alehim expreſſes nothing but tender love and abundant mercy to returning ſinners: for the covenant was made for ſuch, and it was confirmed by an oath, that they might place their whole truſt and confidence on what the Trinity had covenanted to do for them and for their ſalvation:

for the Father, although he be the avenger of ſin, yet has been ſatisfied with the obedience and ſufferings of his co-equal and co-eternal Son, and will be ſatisfied with all thoſe who ſubmit to be ſaved by his righteouſneſs, and the Holy Spirit will influence them to accept the righteouſneſs of God for their juſtification, and he will work mightily in them to enable them to bring forth the fruits of righteouſneſs, until he bring them ſafe to glory.—Theſe are the mercies promiſed in the covenant of grace, and expreſſed by the divine name Alehim. How greatly then ſhould this name encourage convinced ſinners to come and aſk the covenant mercies? And what ſtrong conſolation does it give them, when they flee for refuge to Jeſus Chriſt, and to lay hold of the hope ſet before them in him?

From what has been ſaid, it appears that the firſt part of the commandment, relating to God, is the right knowledge of him, and what we are required to believe concerning his eſſence and perſonality is deſcribed in theſe words:—"Hear, "O Iſrael, Jehovah our Alehim is one Jehovah." Jehovah the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, who is our Alehim, our Trinity, bound by the oath of the covenant to ſave ſinners, theſe three in covenant, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not before

before nor after other, greater or leſs than another, but they are of one and the ſame ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, theſe three are one Jehovah, the holy, bleſſed, and glorious Trinity are one Jehovah.

This, my brethren, is the doctrine of the text, which the Lord God himſelf calls upon you to hear—"Hear, O Iſrael." And have you heard him? Have you received his account of the divine eſſence and perſonality? If not, why do you reject it? Is not his command a law, and are you not bound to believe what the Lord has revealed concerning himſelf?

Perhaps you think the revealed account is not eſtabliſhed upon ſufficient authority. This point does not come under conſideration at preſent. We are only treating of the doctrine, and what can you object againſt it, as it has been now ſtated? Why, ſay ſome, I ſtill think, after all that you have ſaid, the doctrine is inconſiſtent: for you are forced to maintain that three are one. Nay, we maintain no ſuch contradiction; for the Trinity is not three and one in the ſame reſpect, but three in perſon and one in eſſence. The air which is reduced to atoms in the action of fire, and the light which comes from it, and the groſs ſpirit of the air which feeds the fire, theſe three conditions of the air are one in eſ-

ſence,

ſence, and is it any contradiction to ſay, theſe three are one? No ſurely. Juſt ſo we ſpeak of the eſſence as one, and of the perſons in it as three.

Suppoſing this to be a good illuſtration of the doctrine, yet ſtill we cannot receive it, ſay ſome, becauſe it is unintelligible. What is unintelligible? The propoſition itſelf is plain, in the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence there are three perſons. You cannot object to the difficulty of the terms, or of your forming a clear idea of what they convey. But you cannot conceive how there can be three perſons in one eſſence. And is this the cauſe of your unbelief? If you will not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, until you comprehend the manner of the divine exiſtence, conſider how abſurdly you act: For do you know how a ſpirit exiſts? No. And yet you believe the exiſtence of an immortal ſpirit within you. Can you comprehend how an infinite Spirit exiſts? No. You know not how your own ſpirit exiſts, and yet, while you are confeſſedly ignorant of a finite object, you pretend to be ſo well acquainted with the mode and manner of exiſtence of an infinite Spirit, as to reject what is revealed in ſcripture concerning it. Whether this be not acting an abſurd part, I leave it to yourſelves to judge.

But ſtill you cannot think the ſcripture-doctrine of the Trinity is rational. If you go to try it

it by reaſon, you forget that the world by reaſon knew not God. It did not know him formerly in the learned ages of Greece and Rome. And if then this enlightened age has diſcovered how Jehovah exiſts, let our reaſoning infidels demonſtrate, that he exiſts in ſuch a manner as abſolutely excludes all perſonality. But this they cannot demonſtrate, they know they cannot, and yet they pretend the ſcripture-doctrine of the Trinity is not rational, although they have no reaſon againſt it; no good reaſon, however, none that they dare publicly own. The cauſe of their unbelief muſt be aſcribed chiefly to their ſins. While they live in wilful ſin they cannot know God, becauſe their minds are in total blindneſs, and will continue ſo, as long as they continue alienated from the life of God. They muſt be convinced of ſin, and humbled under the ſenſe of it, and ſue for mercy, and receive it, and then they will know the bleſſed Trinity is Jehovah: for no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him by the teaching of his good Spirit. May he, who has the reſidue of the Spirit, ſend him to take away ignorance from all unbelievers, hardneſs of heart and contempt of his word, that they may be converted, and believe to the ſaving of their ſouls.

But beſides theſe more open deniers of the doctrine, we have ſeveral of our own people, who

who attend upon the ordinances of the church, and yet are ignorant of this fundamental doctrine. For their ſakes we ought to inſiſt upon it, and to explain it as taught in ſcripture, and in the liturgy of our church, with which the ſtate of the doctrine, as now laid down, is perfectly conſiſtent. The firſt of the thirty-nine articles treats of faith in the Holy Trinity, and ſays that in the unity of the Godhead there be three perſons of one ſubſtance, power, and eternity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: and the proper preface in the communion-ſervice for Trinity Sunday is more clear and determinate. "It is very meet "and right that we ſhould give thanks to thee, "who art one God, one Lord, not one only per- "ſon, but three perſons in one ſubſtance, for "that which we believe of the glory of the Fa- "ther, the ſame we believe of the Son, and of "the Holy Ghoſt, without ANY DIFFER- "ENCE or INEQUALITY." Theſe are the teſtimonies of our church, and they are very full in confirmation of the doctrine which you have now heard. Conſider them carefully, my brethren, and beg of God to enlighten your underſtandings with the knowledge of the truth. Oh that he may manifeſt it ſo clearly as that you may know the Father to be your reconciled Father, the Son to be your Almighty Saviour, and the Holy Spirit to be your counſeller and comforter, your ſtrengthener and ſanctifier unto the end.

Happy

Happy are they who thus know God, or rather are known of God. You, my Chriſtian brethren, enjoy this happineſs: for you know in whom you have believed. By faith you have come to God, believing that he is Jehovah, the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently ſeek the mercies of the covenant, which was made by the bleſſed three in Jehovah, and which is expreſſed by the gracious name Alehim. You know Jehovah your Alehim, and thus you keep the firſt part of the great commandment of all—Hear, O Iſrael, Jehovah our Alehim is one Jehovah. You believe in and worſhip Jehovah, one in eſſence and three in perſon. You are thankful for what is revealed concerning the perſonality, and the merciful offices ſuſtained by the divine perſons in the covenant of grace. With your lips and with your lives you are ready to ſhew forth the thankfulneſs of your hearts, and to follow me to the next part of my text, which treats of the love of Jehovah Alehim. But this I muſt reſerve for the ſubject of another diſcourſe, only deſiring you at preſent to look up to that Lord and God of whom we have been ſpeaking, and to beſeech him to render uſeful what has been ſaid to all of us. O that he would enable us all to make uſe of the words of our church upon the occaſion, and with the prayer of faith to ſay,

Almighty

Almighty and everlaſting God, who haſt given unto us, thy ſervants, grace by the confeſſion of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine majeſty to worſhip the unity; we beſeech thee, that thou wouldeſt keep us ſtedfaſt in this faith, and ever more defend us from all adverſities, who liveſt and reigneſt one God, world without end. *Amen.*

UPON THE RIGHT

LOVE OF THE LORD GOD.

DISCOURSE VIII.

UPON THE RIGHT

LOVE OF THE LORD GOD.

DISCOURSE VIII.

MARK xii. 28, 29, 30, 31.

And one of the Scribes came, and having heard them reaſoning together, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, aſking him, which is the firſt commandment of all. And Jeſus anſwered him, The firſt of all the commandments is, Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: This is the firſt commandment. And the ſecond is like, namely this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf; there is none other commandment greater than theſe.

OUR bleſſed Saviour has delivered in theſe words, four very important truths:

Firſt, He teaches us the right knowledge of the Lord God.

Secondly, The right love of him.

Thirdly, The right love of our neighbour ariſing from the right love of God; and

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The greatneſs of theſe commandments, there is none other commandment greater than theſe.

The firſt of theſe particulars has been already treated of. It is contained in theſe words: Hear, O Iſrael, Jehovah our Alehim, is one Jehovah. There are three that have entered into covenant in heaven, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and theſe three are one, three perſons of one eſſence. This is the revealed account, and this, my brethren, you are bound to receive, if you believe in God: for if you withdraw your allegiance from the three perſons in one Jehovah, and pay it to an abſolute God exiſting in one perſon, you are as guilty of idolatry as if you had twenty thouſand gods. This is the caſe of every Deiſt, who, by rejecting the ſcripture-doctrine of the Trinity in unity, is in as bad a ſtate as the Atheiſt: for what is the difference between him who has no God, and him who has a falſe God? They are both without the true God in the world, both traitors againſt the majeſty of Jehovah, and both have turned away their ears from hearing his laws. He has commanded them to believe in him as Jehovah Alehim, but they refuſe to believe in him. The Atheiſt ſays there is no Jehovah, and the fool upon record, the Deiſt hath ſaid in his heart, there are no Alheim; and how then can they eſcape his vengeance, ſince he has threatened

that

that they who only forget him ſhall be puniſhed in everlaſting fire, " the wicked ſhall be turned " into hell, and all the people that forget God." The crime is ſmall to forget God, compared to theirs who deny his very being, or who refuſe to worſhip him as the true God. In either caſe they are guilty of high-treaſon: for the Lord God calls upon them to hearken to him. He is about to deliver the firſt and great commandment, and he requires his people to attend and to receive the law from his mouth—Hear, O Iſrael —Iſrael ſignifies all the people of God in whatever age or country they live, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. " Hear, O Iſrael, Jehovah, our " Alheim is one Jehovah," Jehovah is one, but Alheim is plural, more than one, namely, the three in covenant, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who took this name becauſe the covenant was confirmed by an oath for the ſake of the heirs of promiſe, that they might have two immutable things to reſt their faith upon. The right knowledge of God then conſiſts in believing, that in Jehovah the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence there are three co-equal and co-eternal perſons, between whom there is no difference or inequality, but what is made by the covenant of grace. Their names, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not deſcriptive of their nature, but of their offices, they are not to teach us in what manner they exiſt in Jehovah, but they are covenant names, belonging

to the offices which the divine perſons ſuſtain in the covenant. The ſcripture does not uſe theſe names to teach us how the divine perſons exiſt, but how they act; how they ſtand related to the heirs of promiſe, and not what they are in themſelves, as perſons in Jehovah. This is a truth of great importance, which I have endeavoured to defend both from the pulpit and from the preſs; and particularly in a printed diſcourſe upon the ſelf-exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt. The true object of worſhip then, to whom our obedience and love are due, is Jehovah Alehim, according to what is ſaid in the Creed, "the unity in "Trinity and the Trinity in unity is to be wor-"ſhipped." And is this, my brethren, the object of your worſhip? Do you pay your allegiance to a God in one perſon, or to Jehovah in Trinity? If you have not been determined to worſhip Jehovah Alehim, but have broken this firſt part of the great commandment of all, you cannot keep the other parts: for the love of God depends upon the knowledge of God. How ſhould you love the true God until you know him? But if you know him as he has been pleaſed to reveal himſelf to us in the text, as three perſons in one eſſence, and are deſirous of paying him that tribute of love which he requires, then you will gladly follow me to my ſecond general head, namely, to the conſideration of the right love of the Lord God. And

may

may he be preſent with us, while we are treating of his love. Oh that he would ſend his good Spirit to ſtir up longings in their hearts, who have as yet no deſire to love the Lord God, to ſhed his love abroad in their hearts, who are hungering and thirſting for it, and may both ſpeaker and hearers find their love to God increaſe from what ſhall be ſaid upon theſe words—"Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all "thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all "thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength." In diſcourſing upon which I ſhall

Firſt, Shew the nature of the love here commanded.

Secondly, I ſhall conſider, whether all men keep this commandment.

Thirdly, If they do not, in what way the goſpel directs us to attain the love of God, and then in order to ſtir us up to attain it, I will lay before you

Fourthly, Some of the exceeding great and precious promiſes made to them, who love God.

Firſt, The text treats of our love to the Lord God, requiring our love to ariſe from our knowledge of him. When the underſtanding perceives what he is, the heart ought to receive him for its chiefeſt good. As Jehovah, he is the fountain of all good; he is the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, through whoſe power and goodneſs all

other beings exiſt, and therefore to him they all owe their tribute of love and obedience. As Jehovah Alehim the Trinity in covenant, he has engaged to beſtow upon his redeemed people every grace and every bleſſing, which they ſtand in need of in time and in eternity, and on this account he has an undoubted claim to their allegiance. When they view him in this light, their hearts ſhould be determined to love him, and when they partake of the graces and bleſſings of the covenant, they ought to love him out of gratitude. The debt of gratitude is ſo immenſe, that they can never repay it, and therefore they are the more obliged to make every poſſible acknowledgement of their thankfulneſs. They ought to love Jehovah their Alehim with all their heart, with all their ſoul, with all their mind, and with all their ſtrength. And yet when they do love him in this perfect manner, they can only acknowledge the debt, for they leave it ſtill unpaid; and it will be for ever unpaid, as to any return in kind, that they can make. They can only love, (and what leſs can they do than love) the Lord their God for his infinitely rich bleſſings, and this love he demands. As Jehovah, he has a right to demand it of all his creatures, and as Alehim he may claim it of every one who partakes of the benefits of the covenant. They ought to love him

With

With all the heart. The heart is the ſeat of affection. All the affections belong to the heart, and the Lord God here claims them all. They are all to center in him. He is to reign ſole monarch of the heart, and the affections are to be his willing ſubjects, loving him above all things and in all things. Whatever any of them deſire as good, they are to deſire it out of love to God: and they are not to give any object a place in their eſteem, unleſs their love to it be a proof of their love and obedience to God. My ſon, ſays he, give me thy heart, all thy heart, and let me have no rival to ſhare in thy affections. And as he thus demands the love of the immortal ſpirit within us, ſo does he in the next words claim the affections of the human frame. "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God

"With all thy Soul." The Hebrew word here rendered *ſoul*, does not ſignify the immaterial and immortal Spirit, but is generally uſed in ſcripture for the parts concerned in carrying on the circulation of the blood, and in which the appetites of the human frame are placed. Theſe are to be regulated by the love of God, and they are all to be uſed in his ſervice. The heart, being the commanding and ruling faculty, ought to influence them at all times to act upon a principle of love to their infinitely kind creator and benefactor. Every deſire and craving, every inſtinct and paſſion of the animal faculties ſhould

be

be brought into ſuch a cheerful ſubjection to the Lord God, that to do his will ſhould be their delight. There ſhould not be a motion or ſtirring of deſire in any of the appetites, but what took its riſe from love: for all the ſoul, the whole human frame was to be governed and influenced by the perfect love of God. There ſhould not be a deſire in any one inſtinct or appetite, but what ſprung from divine love, and when carried into act and gratified, it ought to be invariably directed by the ſame principle. And the Lord God not only demands the ſervice of all the affections of the immortal ſpirit, and of all the appetites of the human frame, but the text goes on to claim the ſervice of all the rational faculties: for that is the ſenſe of the Greek word which is rendered

With all thy mind. It denotes that power of the mind, whereby it deduces one thing from another. It is what the logicians call diſcurſus, or the art of reaſoning: the mind having before received ideas by ſimple apprehenſion, and formed a judgment of them, is then enabled to reaſon upon them; and this faculty of reaſoning is here meant. So that every thing which the mind can reaſon upon ought to lead it up to God, and to increaſe its love to God. Reaſon, with all its powers, ſhould be under the influence of divine love. And thus the Lord God expects us to keep the firſt and great commandment: he requires

quires all the affections of body, ſoul, and ſpirit, and all the reaſoning faculties to be invariably fixed upon him; and he would not only have them to be influenced by his love, but he would alſo have each of them to exert their whole ſtrength in manifeſting their love in him,

And with all thy ſtrength. The love of God muſt be perfect in kind, in degree, in duration. Whatever ſtrength there is in man, divine love ſhould have the command of it, and the continual uſe of it. All the powers of ſoul and body, and of all their faculties, ſhould be directed in every thought, and word, and work, by the love of God; and there ſhould be no abating of their vigour in any reſpect; but they ſhould be continually carried out with their whole ſtrength into grateful acts of love and obedience.

This is the nature of the love required in the text, and it is required by the Lord God, to whom we are all under infinite obligations, and whom we are bound, by innumerable ties, to love with all the affections of the immortal ſpirit, and of the human frame, with all our reaſoning faculties, and with all our ſtrength. This is the firſt and great commandment, and whoever keeps it in this perfect manner, fulfils the law of the firſt table. He cannot have any other God as an object of love or worſhip, neither can he ſet up any falſe worſhip, nor diſhonour the divine name, by taking it in vain, nor forget

the time appointed for enjoying communion with his God. How can he break any of theſe commands, while the love of God reigns in his heart, and commands all his affections? But if he breaks any one of them, does he not thereby withdraw his love and ſervice from God? and if this be done only once, he has not kept the firſt and great commandment, but is become a tranſgreſſor of the law, and liable to ſuffer the puniſhment due to his tranſgreſſion.

Here then there ariſes an important queſtion, in which you are all nearly concerned, and every one of you ſhould aſk his own heart, Have I kept this firſt and great commandment? The Lord God has an undoubted right to this tribute of perfect love, have I paid it him? Whether you have or not ſhall be now inquired under my

Second general head, and it was propoſed to conſider, whether all men kept this commandment.

Let us examine theſe two faithful witneſſes upon the point, ſcripture and matter of fact, and by their concurrent teſtimony let the truth be eſtabliſhed. Look around you, my brethren, and ſee what men's affections appear to be moſt ſet upon. What are they coveting with all their hearts, wiſhing for with all their ſouls, and purſuing with all their ſtrength, and in the enjoyment of what do they account themſelves happy? Is God in all their thoughts? Is he the chief object

ject of their love, and the great end of all their purſuits? Is gratitude to him the ruling principle of their lives, and do they think themſelves moſt happy when they love him moſt and ſerve him beſt? A very little acquaintance with mankind will ſoon convince you, that God does not reign in their hearts, although his hands have made them and faſhioned them, and their life and breath, and all things come from his bounty, and the uſe of them depends upon his good pleaſure. They have forgotten all his benefits, and turned traitors to their ſovereign Lord. They have taken up arms, and have entered into rebellion againſt his lawful government. They have enliſted freely in the ſervice of ſin to fight under the banner of ſatan. Their love to ſin has drawn them into this unnatural rebellion, and their ſtrong attachment to its pleaſures has made them reject the happineſs which God offers them. While they are at war with him, he publiſhes an act of grace, and out of his infinite mercy declares his willingneſs to forgive them, if they will throw down their arms; but they refuſe to receive his free pardon, being not only lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God, but alſo ſuch deſperate lovers of pleaſure, that they are haters of God. they hate him for denying them the ſweet enjoyment of their beloved ſins; and they hate him the more for threatening to puniſh them. And this hatred ſhews itſelf openly, by their hating

his will, his ordinances, his people; yea, by their hating every thing, that God loves.

Well might the prophet ſay, Lord, what is man? What is he indeed! What a moſt wonderful creature is he, that he ſhould not be afraid to fight againſt the Almighty, and that he ſhould dare to hate an infinitely perfect God! Oh, ſurely he is fallen! fallen greatly from his higher ſtate, ſince he is ſuch a monſter of ingratitude, as to hate his beſt friend and benefactor, even the God who gave him thoſe very faculties of body and ſoul, and who continues the uſe of them, although he makes them the inſtruments and weapons of rebellion, and with them oppoſes God's lawful ſovereignty over him.

But perhaps ſome will aſk, What! are all men hater's of God? Yes, in their natural ſtate every one of them hates him, and this may be demonſtrated from their love of what God hates. All have ſinned, and what can tempt them all to ſin, but the love of it? All men love the world, and place their affections upon the things of it; how could this be, if their hearts were placed upon God, and their affections upon the things of God? If they loved the God of infinite purity, they could not at the ſame time love the world that lieth in wickedneſs; becauſe this is ſetting up their will in oppoſition to his holy will, in which all enmity conſiſts. "If any man love "the world, the love of the father is not in him."

Theſe

Theſe two kinds of love cannot be in the ſame heart; they are at irreconcileable enmity; and yet the love of the world is in the hearts of all natural men. They are turned from the love of God to the love of evil. The heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil. So ſays our ninth article, "Fallen man is of his own "nature inclined to evil," his inclinations are turned from the love of God to the love of evil; yea, ſo entirely turned, that the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are not ſet upon God, but are ſet upon evil, and that continually. And this love of evil is deeply rooted in the very nature and frame of man, and has gotten ſuch entire poſſeſſion of him, that it has made him hate God. This hatred chiefly ſhews itſelf by its oppoſition to the will of God, which is in fact, oppoſition to and hatred of the perſon of God; according to what is written by the prophet, "ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Pſalm xcvii. 10. To which agree the words of our Lord, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," ſhew your love to me by your love and obedience to my will. Does any natural man ſhew his love in this way? No. His heart is in another intereſt. He hates the commandments of God, therefore he hates God. There appears a ſettled fixed hatred in him to the divine ordinances. How little does he read or know of the word of God? many large volumes he has

peruſed,

peruſed, many novels and play-books he has treaſured up in his memory, but the ſacred volume, in which God has revealed all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, is neglected. How many are there of us who never read the Bible through in our lives? Whereas, if we loved God, we ſhould certainly read the ſweet volume of his grace and love with care and diligence, and ſhould be meditating in it day and night. No reading would be ſo pleaſant, as none would be more improving. But the devil's book is far more peruſed than God's. We hear of very few parties that meet together to read the ſcriptures: thank God there are ſome; but thouſands meet together in this city every evening to ſtudy the devil's Book. How can theſe perſons love the Lord God with all their hearts, ſince they hate his revealed will, and can ſpend three or four, or more hours every day at a moſt ſtupid diverſion, and at which God is not in all their thoughts? And as the natural man hates the word, ſo he hates prayer. It is a vaſt burden to him. If you propoſe to him to be of a party, who are going to ſpend an hour this evening in prayer, you will ſoon ſee he has no reliſh to the duty. He will try to get himſelf excuſed, if he can, and if he cannot, it will be to him a moſt miſerable long, dull hour, and he will be very glad, when it is over. The reaſon is, he has no communion with God, and therefore does not love

love to converſe with him. The things of time and ſenſe pleaſe him more than the things of God; yea ſo much more, as to render tedious and hateful all the exerciſes and ordinances of religion. The very table of the Lord is not pleaſant to him. God has been pleaſed to prepare a rich feaſt for his people, but the natural man has no appetite for it. He has no faith to live upon Chriſt's broken body, and blood ſhed; and therefore perhaps never was at the Lord's table in his life, unleſs for ſome prudential reaſons, to pleaſe ſome relations, or to qualify for ſome good place. And as to the Lord's houſe, he never goes there, but out of form and cuſtom. If he is to ſee ſome favourite new play or entertainment, he goes with very exhalted ſpirits to the devil's houſe, but coming to church is a burden; and when he is there, the ſervice is quite tireſome. He wiſhes it was over, and the dull ſermon was ended. The Lord's day has nothing pleaſing to engage his heart. It breaks in upon his buſineſs and pleaſures, and is the moſt ſtupid day in the whole week. If he be a polite man, and of a plentiful fortune, he will ſhew how wearied he is with the divine appointment of this portion of time, by his manner of ſpending it. The day being got over as well as he can in viſiting and company, he thinks the evening may be ſpent at an innocent game of cards, or at a concert of muſic. Can theſe people love God, who thus demonſtrate

ſtrate their enmity to his will and to his ordinances? And if any one reprove them, they will ſoon expreſs their enmity againſt him, and will make him feel it to, if they have it in their power. How dwelleth the love of God in ſuch perſons? Can love beget hatred? If you love any perſon, will you do every thing which you know he hates? Certainly this is the way in which hatred ſhews itſelf; and therefore, ſince all men love ſin, which God hateth, and love the world and the pleaſures and enjoyments of it, and neglect and hate the divine ordinances, it is evident, that the love of God is not in them.

This may be the caſe of the baſer ſort of men, may ſome ſay, but not of the more civilized and polite. Yes, it is the caſe of all alike. Human learning does not bring men to the knowledge of God, nor politeneſs to the love of him. What people were more learned and polite than the Romans? and yet they were "haters of God." Rom. i. 30. They had attained to the higheſt refinement of claſſical learning, and nevertheleſs they continued to hate the true God. They were very polite and civilized in their manners to one another, but in their religion no nation was ever more rude and barbarous. Their city was full of idols, and yet they were without God in the world, for his perſon they rejected by their idolatry, and his moſt adorable attributes and perfections they hated.

But

But ſome may aſk, Is there no difference between us, who are born in a Chriſtian country, and others, who have no knowledge of Chriſt? No, none but what is made by grace. You have many outward privileges in a Chriſtian country; but you do not therefore partake of the love of God, becauſe you partake of theſe privileges. Is not this matter of fact? Is there not as much love of the world; of riches, pleaſures, and honours among nominal Chriſtians, as among Jews or Heathens? For in what does a nominal Chriſtian differ from a Heathen, but in name? He has, indeed, ſome outward privileges, but theſe cannot of themſelves change the inward frame and temper of his mind; becauſe they operate, not mechanically or phyſically, but by the divine influence upon them, and where this is not preſent, although Paul ſhould plant, and Apollos ſhould water, yet there would be no increaſe either of the knowledge or of the love of God.

Does this ſtate of the caſe offend you, my brethren, becauſe it gives you ſuch mean ideas of human nature? Nay, be not offended at what ſcripture plainly teaches, and experience demonſtrates. Rather ſearch your own hearts, and ſee whether there be not in you a ſettled hatred of God. If you examine yourſelves by the rule laid down in the text, and if conſcience does its duty, you will own yourſelves to be guilty of the

breach

breach of the firſt and great commandment. But whether you own it or not, it is an infallible truth. As certainly as God hates ſin, ſo certainly does the unpardoned ſinner hate God: for he that loves ſin cannot love God. While he hates the mind and will of God, how can he poſſibly love the perſon of God? And ſuch haters of God have we all been. We have all loved ſin, which is direct enmity againſt his ſovereign will. We have all committed ſin, which is open rebellion againſt his government. Could we have acted in this manner, if the love of God had been perfected in us? No, ſurely. The love of God would never have led us to break his holy laws, to inſult his authority, and to provoke his juſtice: for hereby the wrath of God abideth upon us, and did we indeed love him, how could we bear to be under his wrath, or how could we think of its abiding upon us for ever and ever? Theſe are undoubted proofs of our having failed in our love to God. We have all broken the firſt and great commandment, and are thereby become tranſgreſſors of the law. We are all ſubject to the pains and penalties threatened to tranſgreſſion, and are unable to do any thing to deliver ourſelves. This is our guilty and helpleſs ſtate. My brethren, are you convinced of it? This conviction is abſolutely neceſſary: for you can never be brought to love God, until you have been made thoroughly

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ſenſible, that by nature you were haters of God. When the Holy Spirit begins to turn your hearts from ſin to righteouſneſs, the firſt ſtep he takes is to convince you of your former hatred to God and to his will. Under a ſenſe of this he humbles you, and makes you pray to God for the diſcovery of his love. Finding yourſelves miſerable without it, you will earneſtly aſk it of him who has it to give. But theſe points come now in order to be conſidered under my

Third head, Under which I purpoſed to explain in what way the goſpel directs us to attain the love of God. One great deſign of Chriſtianity was to reform our love, by bringing it back to its proper object, and by fixing it there. By ſin we had withdrawn our hearts from God, and placed them upon the things of time and ſenſe; whereby we had not only fallen into a ſtate of guilt, but if we had continued in it, we could not have been happy, no, not in heaven, becauſe we cannot be happy in what we hate. Our hatred would turn heaven itſelf into a place of torment. Chriſtianity was the gracious contrivance of God, by which we might be brought to love what would make us really and eternally happy; and this it does by raiſing our affections from the love of the creature to the love of God. It begins this work by convincing us, that we have failed in all the duties of the firſt table, and have broken the great commandment of love, which includes them all. He that is never con-

vinced of this, will never ſee his want of divine love, and therefore will never aſk it. Have you then been convinced, my brethren, from what has been ſaid, that in your natural ſtate you neither do love God, nor can love him by any means in your own power? If you are not convinced what I am going to offer will be of no ſervice to you: becauſe it is in vain to ſhew you how to attain the love of God, if you ſee not the neceſſity of attaining it. May the God of love himſelf convince you of this neceſſity, and help you to follow me with profit in the conſideration of the ſeveral ſteps, by which the goſpel directs ſinners to the love of God, and theſe are three. The

Firſt, Is a lively ſenſe and conviction of their want of the love of God.

Secondly, A clear diſcovery of what Chriſt did to manifeſt the love of the Father, and to reconcile ſinners to him; and,

Thirdly, The work of the Holy Spirit in bringing them to the knowledge and experience of the love of God.

The firſt ſtep towards the attainment of divine love, is a lively ſenſe of the want of it. The Holy Spirit convinces the ſinner of his guilt for having withdrawn his love and obedience from the Lord God, and for having thereby robbed him of his due honour and ſervice. The ſinner upon this feels what it is to have provoked an Almighty

Almighty God, and in his guilty conſcience he has fearful apprehenſions of God's anger, and of abiding under his wrath. He finds he ſhould have grovelled on in the ſinful love of the creature, if the Holy Spirit had not thus convinced him of his guilt, and made him feel his miſery. He now ſees he has broken all the firſt table, and is become a tranſgreſſor of the law, and therefore is ſtirred up in earneſt to ſeek for the ſenſe of God's pardoning love.

This is the Lord's way, in which he brings him to know himſelf, and to experience the emptineſs of all creature love; and thus he puts him upon ſeeking happineſs in God. My brethren, have you been made ſenſible of your want of it; and are you ſeeking it in him? If you are, you have great reaſon to be thankful; for you have already ſome tokens of his love. He has put it into your hearts to ſeek his favour; may he draw you by the cords of his love, until you have a clear diſcovery of what Chriſt did to manifeſt the love of the Father, and to reconcile ſinners to him; which is the ſecond ſtep towards the attainment of divine love.

We could never have attained it by any means in our own power, and no mere creature could have attained it for us: becauſe before the Father would manifeſt his love to us, he would have all the demands of his law and juſtice fully anſwered. While the broken law ſtood out againſt

us, and juſtice was concerned to ſee its pains and penalties inflicted, we could have no peace with God. But Chriſt undertook the work of reconciliation, by doing all that his law required, and by ſuffering all that his juſtice demanded, and thereby making a full atonement for our ſins. The law he fully ſatisfied by his infinitely perfect obedience; for by it he magnified the law, and made it honourable, inſomuch, that "by the "obedience of one, many ſhall be made righte-"ous." Rom. v. 19. His obedience was abſolutely neceſſary to make them righteous before God, otherwiſe Chriſt obeyed in vain. Juſtice he fully ſatisfied by his infinitely meritorious ſufferings. It was decreed, that without ſhedding of blood there ſhould be no remiſſion; but it was not poſſible, that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould obtain remiſſion; wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he ſaith to his Father, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and ſacrifices for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure; then ſaid I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, by making myſelf an offering for ſin. This was the Father's will. He accepted the ſufferings of the juſt for the unjuſt; and when the holy lamb, through the eternal ſpirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, he was an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour. The Father is well pleaſed with him, and is alſo well pleaſed

with them, who have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins. For the prophet, ſpeaking of them, ſays (Pſalm lxxxv. 2, 3), "Thou haſt forgiven the iniquity of thy people, "thou haſt covered all their ſin. Selah. Thou "haſt taken away all thy wrath, thou haſt turned "thyſelf from the fierceneſs of thine anger." This is the character of God in Chriſt. His wrath is turned away from his people. For what reaſon? Are they not ſinners, even as others? Yes, but he is well pleaſed with them for Chriſt's righteouſneſs ſake, through whom he has forgiven their iniquity, and has covered all their ſin.

When the ſinner, convinced of his want of divine love, is thus ſatisfied that Chriſt has paid the full price to obtain it, having anſwered all the demands of law and juſtice, and that ſinners may now be brought nigh to a reconciled Father, and may taſte and ſee how gracious he is, then he waits for this bleſſing, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is his work and office to bring convinced ſinners to the knowledge and experience of the love of God, and this is the third particular I was to treat of.

The Holy Spirit directs the hearts of awakened and convinced ſinners into the love of God in this way and method. He makes them ſenſible of their wants, and then ſhews them where they have a ſupply. He gives them evidence to believe the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt, whoſe obedience

and

and ſufferings were divine and infinitely meritorious, and made a full and perfect ſatisfaction for ſin. God the Father accepted them as ſuch; and ſince his juſtice was well pleaſed and ſatisfied with them, the ſinner thinks he may be ſatisfied with them alſo: for as there is no objection againſt them in the court of heaven, ſo there ought to be none in the court of his conſcience. Then the Holy Spirit enables him to put forth an act of faith, and to rely upon Chriſt as a tried foundation. He caſts himſelf upon Chriſt's power to ſave, believing him to be Jehovah the Lord God Almighty; and hearing and reading the gracious promiſes of Chriſt's readineſs to ſave all that come to him, he ſees there is no reaſon for him to doubt either of Chriſt's power, or of Chriſt's love to fulfil his promiſes: upon which he is enabled thus to addreſs the Lord Chriſt;

O almighty and moſt merciful Saviour, in whom the Father is reconciled to returning ſinners, thou haſt the reſidue of the Spirit with thee, by whom they may be reconciled to God; I bleſs thee, I praiſe thee, and glorify thee, for the ineſtimable gift of thy good Spirit, by whom I have been enabled to reſt upon thy promiſes, and to rely upon thy faithfulneſs to fulfil them, even to me a miſerable, helpleſs ſinner. O Lord, ſtrengthen my faith by the grace of the ſame Spirit; that it may work by love, that having

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ſtill more clear evidence of the Father's being reconciled to me, I may love him with all my heart and with all my ſoul.

With ſuch actings of faith in prayer, God is well pleaſed; for they are the breathings of his own Spirit in the believer's heart, and he will anſwer them. He ſtrengthens faith and increaſes love, according to what is written. Rom. v. 5. "The love of God is ſhed abroad in "our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt which is given "unto us." The Holy Spirit is given to the believer to hear witneſs with his ſpirit that he is a child of God: and when the word of God, and the Spirit of God, thus bear their joint teſtimony to his being beloved of the Father for Chriſt's ſake, then he is rooted and grounded in love, and is diſpoſed, and mightily ſtrengthened in the inner man to perform every work and labour of love.

Thus the goſpel repreſents the whole Trinity as concerned in directing the ſinner's heart into the love of God. The Father forgives all his offences through the atonement of his beloved Son, who did and ſuffered all that was required by law and juſtice, and the Holy Spirit diſpoſes the ſinner to be reconciled to God, and to believe in his word; and then gives him faith to apply the promiſes to himſelf, and to love God, who firſt loved him. Our love to him ariſes from the evidence we have of his love to us: for without this

this evidence an awakened ſinner cannot love God. While he looks upon God as the juſt avenger of his ſins, it is impoſſible that he ſhould love him, and ſo long as guilt remains in his conſcience, he cannot but fear and dread the juſtice of the Almighty, and theſe terrors will entirely ſhut out all love: for it is againſt nature to love pain; and how then can the awakened ſinner love that offended God, who is to inflict it upon him? He cannot love him, until he has ſome ſenſe of God's pardoning love, and of his intereſt in the covenant of grace. The text declares this truth—"Thou ſhalt love the Lord "thy God," thy covenant God, not an abſolute God, ſuch as the Deiſts worſhip, but a God related to thee in the covenant of grace. Thy God is a relative term, implying the relation which God ſtood in to the believer, and which is here expreſſed by the word Alehim, thy Alehim. The Trinity bound in covenant to redeem man are thine, and ſtand related to thee in all their covenant offices, the Father is thy Father, the Son is thy Saviour, the Holy Spirit is thy counſellor, guide, ſanctifier, and ſtrengthener, all the graces and bleſſings of the covenant are thine in time and in eternity; therefore thou ſhalt love Jehovah thy Alehim, for theſe ineſtimable mercies, with all thy heart and mind, and ſoul and ſtrength.

My

My brethren, is this your experience?---You were once haters of God, have you been brought to love him, and do you know him to be your reconciled Father? The goſpel has revealed no other way of attaining his love, but ſeeking it through Chriſt, and receiving it by the grace of his Spirit. Have you then ſought and received it in this way? If you have, you will gladly follow me to my

Fourth general head, Which was to treat of the promiſes made to them, who love God. Theſe promiſes are exceeding great and exceeding precious, containing every covenant bleſſing of grace and glory. The Lord has engaged to preſerve them that love him (Pſalm cxlv. 20); and to keep covenant and mercy with them that love him (Deut. vii. 9); yea, they that love the Lord ſhall be like the ſun, when he goeth forth in his might (Judges v. 31); nothing ſhall ſtop their courſe, afflictions, ſickneſs, temptations, all manner of trials ſhall help them forward: for all things ſhall work together for good to them that love God. (Rom. viii. 28.) But it is impoſſible to deſcribe the great things, which God hath prepared for them that love him. If a man love me, ſays Chriſt, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him. (John xiv. 23.) This fellowſhip with the Father and the Son by the bond of the Spirit is the greateſt happineſs which

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can be enjoyed, next to the crown of life, which God hath promiſed to them who love him (James i. 12), and who ſhall be for ever happy in the enjoyment of his love. Are not theſe promiſes exceeding great and precious? And on whom, my brethren, can you place your affections, who has any ſuch promiſes to make you? Can the world bid ſo high for your hearts? Are its pleaſures worthy to be compared with the pleaſures laid up at God's right hand for evermore? Are its honours and riches like the honour and riches which come from God? What can ſin offer you, what can Satan propoſe, what can the fleſh covet, that can be put in competition with the bleſſedneſs which God has promiſed to them who love him? If they promiſe more than God, they are liars, and if you truſt them, you will be deceived. But God's promiſes are like himſelf, unchangeable. He is faithful and juſt to fulfil them. And he does fulfil them daily. His people are witneſſes for him; they declare, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord hath promiſed in his word to them that love him. All are come to paſs unto them, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Oh that you were all his witneſſes, and knew the happineſs of his love. May he ſhed it abroad in all your hearts for his mercies ſake, and enrich you with the bleſſings of his love in time and in eternity.

Having

Having conſidered the nature of the firſt and great commandment, it behoves us to apply what has been ſpoken, and make it uſeful to ourſelves. My brethren, have you found any uſe in it? Are your hearts placed upon the Lord God? Is he the reigning object of your affections? How were you brought to love him? Did you ever find yourſelves miſerable becauſe you were at enmity with him? And did you ſeek the Father's love through Chriſt, as the effect of his obedience and ſufferings, hoping that the Father was your Father for the righteouſneſs-ſake of his beloved Son? And did you continue in this way ſeeking, until you received the faith which worketh by love? If this be your experience, bleſs God for this unſpeakable gift. It becometh you well to be thankful. Praiſe him with your lips. Praiſe him with your lives, and give him every teſtimony of your love, which he requires; eſpecially give him your hearts, and let him reign in them. There let Chriſt ſet up his kingdom, and by his ſovereign power ſubdue your enemies and his: for, when Chriſt dwells in your hearts by faith, ye ſhall then be rooted and grounded in love, and ſhall be ſtrengthened with might in the inner man to do his will, and to ſuffer it. Then your conſtant language will be, What ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall any trouble, becauſe painful? Shall any temptation, becauſe ſtrong? Shall any duty,

becauſe

becauſe hard? Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Are there any of you, my brethren, who are not thus rejoicing in the love of God, but are wiſhing and deſiring to be in this happy ſtate? From whence ariſe your deſires? Do they come from the conviction of your ſin and miſery? Do you feel the enmity of your wills, and the rebellion of your hearts againſt God? And do you therefore wiſh, that although you are now enemies, yet you may be reconciled to God by the death of his Son? Have not you been trying to do ſomething in part to make a reconciliation with God? And what was the event? Have not all your attempts failed, and have not you been brought to ſee the inſufficiency of your works to make your peace with God? And did the ſenſe of this ſend you, as helpleſs ſinners, to the throne of grace, intreating the Lord Chriſt to be your peace, and to make both one? Is this your experience? If it be, thus far you have been directed aright unto the love of God. But who brought you thus far? Is it not he who is to carry on, and to give you the bleſſing for which you wait. It is the Holy Spirit who has convinced you of your guilt and miſery in turning your hearts from God, and who has diſpoſed you to ſeek his love, and who is alſo to ſhed it abroad

abroad in your hearts. And this he will do, by giving you the faith which worketh by love. He will enable you to truſt God's faithful word, which cannot be broken, and to rely upon his unchangeable promiſes, which cannot poſſibly fail of being fulfilled to every one, who comes and ſues for mercy and favour through the righteouſneſs of the Lord Chriſt. Thus he will give you power to put forth, and to act faith, and to apply the promiſes to yourſelves, whereby he will bring you to ſee that Chriſt loved you, and gave himſelf for you, which will produce love in your hearts, and the fruits of love in your lives. Wait then upon him for this bleſſing. Wait under the word, hoping and praying that he would make it the means of working faith in your hearts; and when it is given unto you to believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, then he will fulfil the work of faith with power, he will ſupport the patience of hope, and he will carry on the labour of love even unto the end.

Perhaps there may be ſome perſons here, who have no deſire to love God. They have given up their hearts to other objects, and are pleaſed with their choice. O ye ſons of men, how long will ye thus idolize the ſinful creature, and rebel againſt the almighty Creator? How long will ye love vanity, and ſeek after happineſs in the ways of

of ſin? Can theſe things make you happier than God can? Nay, know ye not, that at the end of your fancied pleaſures there is real miſery for evermore? And are you making a good bargain? Is it worth your while to give up all hopes of heaven and glory for the ſake of ſome preſent joys? And what are they? Are they ſolid and laſting, and do they make you happy through life? Have you no uneaſy ſenſations when you are ſometimes alone, or when you are viſited with ſickneſs? Does not a troubleſome thought then intrude, "What will become of me, if I "ſhould die? If I was to be in heaven, I could "not be happy; becauſe I love nothing that is "there. I have no love for God, nor for his "will, nor for his people; I find no pleaſure in "praiſing God here, how then could I rejoice in "ſinging his praiſes hereafter? If ever your mind has been led to ſuch reflections, how did you get rid of them? Did you try to drive them away by company or diverſions? And you ſucceeded; the melancholy fit wore off, and you thought it a great bleſſing you was eaſy again. This ſingle inſtance is ſufficient to demonſtrate that you are not happy; and indeed it is impoſſible that you ſhould be ſo. While your heart is turned from God, it is ſet upon ſin, and ſin has no happineſs to give. Its promiſes are all lies, and its enjoyments are all deluſions: for

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it undertakes to make you happy in that, to which the Almighty has threatened eternal miſery, and the practice of which will bring this miſery upon you. Men and brethren, are not theſe things ſo? And why then will ye ſet your love upon ſin? Can it make you perfectly happy? Deal fairly with yourſelves. Are you as happy as you would wiſh to be? You know you are not. I appeal to your own hearts. But if any of you are ſo deſperately deluded, as to wiſh for no other happineſs, than what the pleaſures of ſin can give you, yet did you ever conſider what would be the end of this deluſion? Oh think upon that, and may the ſenſe of it open your eyes: for ſurely you are acting a moſt unnatural and wicked part, to chooſe eternal miſery rather than part with ſome ſinful pleaſure. May the God of all grace convince you of your want of his love, and bring you to know and experience the happineſs of it, and oh that he may now put it into your hearts to pray for it. May he, the Lord and giver of every good gift, bleſs what has been now ſpóken, and render it the means of increaſing his love in the hearts of all this congregation. May he pardon our imperfect manner of thinking and ſpeaking of his divine and infinite love, and may he ſhed it abroad abundantly in all our hearts. Oh that he would ſend us away inflamed with his love, and would

give us grace to walk in love, continually evidencing our unfeigned love to him by our love to his commandments.

Grant us theſe our requeſts, moſt holy Father, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord, to whom with thee, and the eternal Spirit, three co-equal and co-eternal perſons in one Jehovah, we aſcribe the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

UPON THE RIGHT

LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

DISCOURSE IX.

UPON THE RIGHT

LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

DISCOURSE IX.

MARK xii. 28, 29, 30, 31.

And one of the ſcribes came, and having heard them reaſoning together, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, aſked him, which is the firſt commandment of all. And Jeſus anſwered him; the firſt of all the commandments is, Hear, O Iſrael, *the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: This is the firſt commandment. And the ſecond is like, namely, this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf; there is none other commandment greater than theſe.*

IN theſe words our bleſſed Saviour has given us the ſum and ſubſtance of all practical religion. He has reduced it to two ſhort rules, which yet are ſo full and copious, that they comprehend all the law and the prophets. The whole ſcripture was to lead us to the right knowledge of

the Lord God, that we might pay him the love and obedience which are his due, and might love our neighbour as ourſelves.

I have already diſcourſed of the two parts of the firſt commandment, and have endeavoured to explain and to enforce the right knowledge and the right love of the Lord God, and I come now to the ſecond commandment, which is contained in theſe words of the text: "And "the ſecond is like, namely this, Thou ſhalt "love thy neighbour as thyſelf." The ſecond is like unto the firſt, becauſe it treats of the ſame ſubject, is enforced by the ſame authority, and is enacted for the ſame wiſe and gracious purpoſes; and the ſecond is farther like, becauſe it ariſes and branches out of the firſt, ſince if any man has the true love of God in his heart, it will evidence and prove itſelf to be there, by enabling him to love his neighbour as himſelf. The right love of our neighbour is the fruit and effect of our love of God, and can ſpring from no other root, eſpecially in the perfect degree here required, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. This is an abridgment of the whole moral law, and comprehends all the duties of the ſecond table. As he who loves God keeps the firſt table, ſo he, who loves his neighbour as himſelf, keeps the ſecond. May the Lord incline all our hearts to keep it, and may his good Spirit render uſeful and profitable what ſhall be ſaid,

Firſt,

First, Concerning the inſeparable connection between the two commandments, the love of God and the love of our neighbour.

Secondly, Concerning the nature and extent of the ſecond commandment—Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.

Thirdly, Concerning the ſcripture-method of enabling us to keep this commandment. And then,

Fourthly, I ſhall make ſome practical obſervations upon theſe particulars.

As to the firſt of theſe points, I lay this down for an evident truth; that the man can have no real love for his neighbour, who has not firſt the love of God in his heart, ſuch a true experimental ſenſe of God's love to him in Chriſt Jeſus, as was treated of in the laſt diſcourſe: for the love of our neighbour ſtands upon the love of God. It has no other foundation. Build it upon what you pleaſe but this, you will find nothing elſe ſtrong enough to act againſt the oppoſition of a man's own ſelfiſh heart. But as we have many pretended maſter-builders, who lay another foundation than that is laid, and as ſome of the moſt dangerous miſtakes in religion, ariſe from building upon theſe men's foundation I will therefore bring ſome arguments to prove the inſeparable connection between the two commandments, the love of God and the love of our neighbour. And

First,

Firſt, A man cannot love his neighbour aright, until he be endued with the love of God; becauſe he has no principle of love in his heart. Man, in his natural ſtate, or as our church expreſſes it, man, before he receives the grace of Chriſt and the inſpiration of his Spirit, has no holy pure love of any kind. All his affections are placed upon wrong objects and directed to wrong ends. They are turned from God, and placed upon thoſe objects, the love of which he has forbidden, and they are directed to the pleaſing of ſelf, and not to the glory of God. This is the ſcripture-character of fallen man. He has no brotherly love; and how ſhould he have any? for he has no natural affection. He acts contrary to thoſe very inſtincts by which the brutes act invariably. With all his boaſted reaſon, and dignified faculties, he is in ſocial life lower than a brute: for are there not parents who have no love for their children, and children who have no love for their parents? Is it not a common thing to find a family divided againſt itſelf, and Cain perſecuting Abel unto death? And what principle of love can he have in his heart, who is thus without natural affection; Natural affection ties men together with the ſtrongeſt bonds of love, but all theſe he breaks aſunder; and therefore it is juſt as poſſible that any brotherly love ſhould be in him, as that a fountain ſhould ſend forth at the ſame time ſweet water and bitter. But

Secondly,

Secondly, The natural man is not only without a principle of love, but is alſo deſcribed by that God who created his heart, and knows it intimately to be actuated by a principle of hatred. Until he has ſome of the love of God ſhed abroad in his heart, he cannot have any true love for his neighbour: becauſe he is abſolutely under the influence of vicious ſelf-love, and while this reigns in the heart, brotherly love can have no place; nay, it will be abſolutely ſhut out, as the Apoſtle ſhews, Titus iii. 3, We ourſelves alſo "(as well as others) ſometimes lived in malice "and envy, hateful and hating one another." When did he, as others, live in this malicious, envious, hateful ſtate? He was, he ſays, a ſlave to theſe baſe tempers, until the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour was manifeſted to him; and therefore until this be manifeſted to any man, he muſt be a ſlave to the ſame tempers. He cannot be delivered from them by any human means. No knowledge, no power of philoſophy, no ſyſtem of morality, no ſtretch of genius, nor refinements of polite life, can make a man leſs hateful in himſelf, or leſs diſpoſed to hate others. Had not the Romans all theſe advantages, and yet we have this character of them drawn by an infallible pen. They were filled with all unrighteouſneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whiſperers, backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters,

boaſters, diſobedient to parents, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. Thus were they hateful, and hating one another? and ſuch is every man before he receives the grace of Chriſt. He has all theſe evil tempers in him, which the Romans had.

But ſome perhaps may aſk, What is the cauſe of this univerſal depravity of man's affections? The corruption of his nature is the true cauſe: for all our evil tempers ſpring from the corrupt heart. The fountain is polluted, and therefore the ſtreams run foul. Out of the heart, ſays our Lord, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, with the other abominable deeds of the fleſh, ſome of which the Apoſtle mentions by name, Gal. v. 20, ſuch as hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, envyings. Theſe are in every heart: for the imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil, and that continually, continually evil, becauſe continually ſet againſt the love of God, and againſt that love of our neighbour, which the will of God requires us to pay him. Surely then this heart muſt be changed, before brotherly love can enter into it. Grace muſt work upon its evil tempers, and the Spirit of God muſt ſubdue them, that love and its ſweet diſpoſitions may rule in the heart. Love firſt takes place in us, when the Spirit of God ſheds it abroad, and manifeſts to us the pardoning love of our God. Then a new principle of love takes poſſeſſion of

the heart, which ſtrives againſt and conquers our ſelfiſh tempers. But until this be done by the ſpirit of love, there is nothing in any man but SELF. His views are all narrow and ſelfiſh. The end of all his purſuits is ſelf-ſeeking, and the end of all his enjoyments is ſelf-pleaſing. This is God's own account of his fallen creature, man. And what ſays matter of fact? Is this man's real character? I ſhall endeavour to prove under my

Third argument that it is. Experience demonſtrates it. Look around you, my brethren, and ſee what men are doing. Does love reign in every breaſt? Are they ſtudying how to make each other happy, and rejoicing in each others happineſs? No. The contrary ſpirit prevails. Is there any little village free from diſputes and quarrels? Where is there any large buſineſs or manufactory free from contention and envy among the various perſons concerned in carrying it on? If they be all of one mind and of one heart, is it not generally a wicked combination to enrich themſelves by oppreſſing others? Is there any trading city, whoſe merchants rejoice in the proſperity of others, as in their own? Is there any ſtate free from parties? Bleſſed be God for the leſſening of party ſpirit among us. It has received a great blow, but it is not dead. It is only waiting for ſome public misfortune to

give

give it a ſpecious occaſion of raiſing freſh diſturbance and confuſion. And look into the preſent melancholy ſtate of Europe: where do you find brotherly love? Oh where can it ſubſiſt amidſt the horrors of war? It was not brotherly love which raiſed armies, ranged them in order of battle, put them upon action, and made brethren rejoice in the ſlaughter and death of each other. Brotherly love has not a more diſtreſſing ſight, than when it ſurveys a field of battle, upon which there lay ten or twenty thouſand unhappy men ſlain in one day. Theſe are awful proofs of the aſcendency which hatred has in the human breaſt. It has got poſſeſſion, has ſeized the throne, and has entirely baniſhed all brotherly love. The fact is notorious: for men are every where complaining of the miſeries which they meet with in ſocial life; and they do not complain without reaſon. The time is come when this character is fulfilled. "Men "ſhall be lovers of themſelves, covetous, proud, "boaſters, blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, "unthankful, unholy, without natural affecti-"on, truce-breakers, falſe accuſers, incon-ti-"nent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe that are good, "traitors, heady, high-minded." Is not this a real picture of mankind? Do we not find theſe unſociable tempers prevailing among them at this day, and do not theſe demonſtrate, that

man

man is incapable of having any true love for his neighbour, until he has the love of God in his heart.

But ſuppoſing that man, in his natural ſtate, could do ſome ſeeming acts of love to his neighbour, yet they would avail nothing without the love of God, which is my fourth argument. Since fallen man has not the love of God in his heart by nature, nor is capable of attaining it by any means in his own power, the great buſineſs of religion is to bring him to love God, and to keep the firſt and great commandment; which the goſpel alone can enable him to do. Moral philoſophers have been trying, but they have always failed. They make religion conſiſt in the duties of the ſecond table, omitting the firſt, which is the ſame thing as if they laid the foundation in the air, and built the houſe downwards. Morality has no foundation without the love of God. All moral obligations to brotherly love fail in their motives, and in their end. Their motives are like ſo many ropes of ſand. They have no force to bind and to oblige the conſcience. We have many men who write and ſpeak learnedly about moral duties, but here they fail; they can offer no obligation ſtrong enough to over-balance the propenſity in the ſinner's heart againſt thoſe duties. His heart pleads more ſtrongly againſt them than they can plead for them. They may talk

talk eloquently to him of the beauty of virtue, and may argue with him closely upon the fitness of things, and may try to persuade him by a fine chain of reasoning to act agreeably to the nature of things and to the moral sense, and they may recommend the whole from the charms of universal benevolence. All this looks very pretty in theory, and may make a fine system of the religion of nature delineated, but bring it to practice. Offer these motives when self-love has some favorite passion to gratify, or self-interest has some great prospect of advantage, and what is the consequence? The man is deaf to all your moral arguments. They cannot reach his heart, nor open and enlarge it to receive brotherly love, but leave it still under the power of its selfish tempers. These have too deep a root in nature to be driven out by the mere dint of moral reasoning. Grace alone can subdue them; and when grace places the love of God in the heart, then it delivers the affections from vicious self-love, and makes them act by a constant uniform principle of love to the brethren.

And as morality fails in its motives, so does it also in its end. It proposes a wrong end. The glory of God should be the end of all our actions, but moral men seek their own glory by their works: for they suppose that their works are meritorious, and can procure them the love

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and favour of God by way of desert. Thus they set aside faith, without which no moral works can be acceptable. Faith alone directs us to a right end, and proposes the right means to attain it, and every act and exercise of faith towards the attaining of it is well-pleasing unto God. But morality without faith cannot please God: for it is an adjudged case in scripture, "that without faith it is impossible to "please him," and it has been determined by our church in her thirteenth article, that works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ. It is faith working by love, which renders those works pleasant to God, that done upon any other motive would be highly displeasing to him.

Let these arguments suffice for the proof of the first point. It appears from their evidence, that the love of our neighbour arises from the love of God. There is no other foundation for it. You must keep the duties of the first table before you can keep those of the second. The connection between them is inseparable. Unless a man first has the love of God in his heart, he cannot have any true love for his neighbour. He cannot love him at all, and much less in the perfect manner here required—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. And this leads me

to

to ſpeak of the nature and extent of the ſecond commandment under my ſecond general head.

The text requires a very exalted and refined degree of brotherly love. It commands us to love our neighbour as ourſelves, with the ſame ſtrength, with the ſame conſtancy of affection: for no man ever yet hated his own fleſh, but nouriſheth it, and cheriſheth it; ſo ſhould he nouriſh and cheriſh his neighbour in all good things. Whatever good he wiſheth to himſelf, the ſame ſhould he wiſh to his neighbour; and whatever evil he would have kept off from himſelf, the ſame ſhould he endeavour to keep off from his neighbour; and he ſhould, in both theſe reſpects, exert himſelf for his neighbour, as much as for himſelf. But who are required thus to love their neighbour? The law reaches to all men and to all caſes. The ſame authority which enjoins the perfect love of God, enjoins alſo the perfect love of our neighbour; and can any fallen man keep theſe commandments? No, while he is in his natural ſtate it is impoſſible. We have before proved, that he can neither love God nor his neighbour, until his affections be changed, and vicious ſelf-love be taken out of his heart. But when grace has made him a new creature, when his underſtanding is enlightened, his will is rightly diſpoſed, and his heart is under the influence of divine love, then the text ſpeaks to

this man, and ſays, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. The ſame grace, which led thee to love thyſelf aright, will operate with equal force in the love of thy neighbour, and will ſhew itſelf in every work and labour of love.

It is evident then, that the duty is of great extent. The object on whom it is to be exerciſed is mankind in general: for every one is our neighbour who ſtands related to us in the common bonds of humanity. If he be a Heathen, a Turk, or a Jew, he is nevertheleſs bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh. Nay, if he be our enemy, yet ſtill he is our neighbour; we are of one family, and of one father, and therefore his hatred to us ſhould not ſtop the current of our love to him, as our Lord has taught us in the 10th chapter of St. Luke. A certain lawyer aſked him, Who is my neighbour? Jeſus anſwered him in a parable. The Jews and the Samaritans were at ſuch great variance, that they would not even have any dealings with one another; and a certain man, in going down from Jeruſalem to Jerico, fell among thieves, who ſtripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. A prieſt and a Levite ſaw their countryman in this diſtreſs, but paſſed by without giving him any help; and afterwards a Samaritan came to the place where he was, and when he ſaw him, he had compaſſion on him, and gave him all the aſ-

ſiſtance

ſiſtance in his power. Which now of theſe three, ſays Chriſt, was neighbour to him that fell among thieves? The lawyer anſwered, He that had mercy on him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go, and do thou likewiſe. Go and imitate this Samaritan. Learn of him to look upon all men, even thine enemies as thy neighbours, and love them, and do good to them, as he did. Thus it is plain, from our Lord's explanation of the word neighbour, that we ought to extend our love to all men, and alſo to all caſes. It is to reach to the inmoſt deſires of the heart. The love of God being ſhed abroad there, will take the command of the affections; and when love is on the throne reigning in the heart, it will ſweetly incline and mightily enable the other faculties to obey its dictates. Love will not dwell in the ſame heart with ſelfiſhneſs and hatred, but will oppoſe and ſubdue them, in order to make room for brotherly love; and when this comes and dwells in the heart, the man is thereby always diſpoſed to think, and ſpeak, and act, for the good of his neighbour. He has in him an abiding principle of love, which, according to what is written, "thinketh no evil." Love works firſt upon the thoughts of the heart, from whence all the words and actions ſpring. It infuſes its gracious influences into the root, that the ſap and juices communicated from thence may partake of its nature, and that whatever grows upon this

ſtem

ſtem may be the fruit of love. That heart-love, which thinketh no evil, will ſpeak none: for as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh, ſo love being in the heart will ſhew itſelf in the tongue, and will not ſpeak evil of its neighbour; nor can love do him any harm. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, Rom. xiii. "10, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law;" to love our neighbour as ourſelves is the fulfilling of the law of the ſecond table. Which they that have the love of God in their hearts endeavour to keep, not to merit heaven; for that was the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood; but they are kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven them, and they walk in love as Chriſt hath alſo loved them.

This is the nature and extent of brotherly love. It ſprings from the love of God, and is guided and influenced by it. Whatever the love of God teaches a man to do for his own good, brotherly love will put him upon doing the ſame for the good of others, and not only of his particular friends and relations, but alſo of mankind, yea, of his very enemies; even for them brotherly love has its good wiſhes, and its good offices. It would not entertain an injurious thought of its neighbour, nor ſpeak a word to his prejudice, nor do any thing to his hurt. Its conſtant breathings are, As I have opportunity,

I would do good unto all men. And is this, my brethren, the language of every one of your hearts? Have you a principle of brotherly love actuating and influencing every thought and word and work? Examine yourſelves cloſely upon this point. It may help to ſhew you clearly the ſtate of your ſouls: for this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God loves his brother alſo. If your love to God be from a right motive, and to a right end, it will work in all the kind offices of brotherly love. If you fail in theſe, you certainly fail firſt in your love to God: for theſe are the ſtreams which flow from the fountain, and they could not fail, unleſs the fountain ceaſed to ſupply them. There is a want of the love of God in the heart, when there is a want of any of the good offices of brotherly love in the life. Search and ſee if this be not your caſe; and if it be, look up to God and intreat him to direct your hearts into his love, that you may hear with profit what ſhall be ſaid under my

Third general head, Concerning the ſcripture method of enabling us to keep this commandment. Man has no generous principle in him by nature. Vicious ſelf-love directs and governs all his views and actions, and therefore he muſt be changed and renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, before brotherly love can have any place in his heart. The ſcripture treats largely of this

great

great change, and aſcribes the whole of it to the Spirit of God. He enlightens the underſtanding, and convinces the ſinner of his guilt and of his danger: then he attacks the ſtubborn ſelf-will, and makes the ſinner feel, that if he follow his own will he muſt unavoidably periſh, and that everlaſtingly: and he alſo ſhews him the horrid rebellion of his heart, whoſe affections are all apoſtates from God, having ſet up the creature and ſerved it in the place of the Creator. The ſinner becomes deeply ſenſible of his guilt and of his miſery, and is made earneſtly to wiſh and to pray for deliverance: and when the Lord has thoroughly humbled him, and by various ways and means has convinced him of his own utter helpleſſneſs, then he enables him to believe to the ſaving of his ſoul. He finds himſelf at peace with God through the righteouſneſs of the Lord Chriſt, on which he can rely for his acceptance and pardon; and therefore he loves God, who has firſt ſo exceedingly loved him; and he proves, by his unfeigned love to the brethren, that this love of God is in his heart: for, being there, it will produce the kind diſpoſitions, and will draw forth the good offices of brotherly love. In this way grace overcomes the ſelfiſhneſs of nature, and anger, wrath, malice, hatred, and the other unſociable tempers of the old man are ſubdued, and the new man puts on bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meek-

neſs, long-ſuffering. Theſe are ſanctified affections in him; becauſe they are the genuine fruits of that faith which worketh by love.

This is the ſcripture-method of attaining brotherly love. It cannot be attained but by the grace of God: for the eſtabliſhed rule is—"Ye "are taught of God to love one another." It is not from human, but from divine teaching. Brotherly love is not learnt in the ſchools of moral philoſophy. The greateſt profeſſors of ethics may write pretty ſyſtems, and read lectures upon them to their pupils, and perhaps they may explain to them ſomething about brotherly love; but they can place none of it in the heart. Chriſt alone can do that. He is the great teacher of brotherly love; and it is in his ſchool only where men can learn it practically. He teaches his diſciples firſt their want of it; and when he gives them his love, and ſheds it abroad in their hearts, then alſo he gives them the love of the brethren, as it is written, 1 John iv. 7, "Be-"loved, let us love one another: for love is of "God; and every one that loveth, is born of "God, and knoweth God;" he is a child of God, becauſe he loveth his heavenly Father, and loveth all his Father's children: which doctrine the ſame Apoſtle maintains in theſe words, 1 John v. 1, "Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is "the Chriſt, is born of God, and every one that "loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is "begotten

" begotten of him." Here the apoſtle diſcovers the true cauſe from which ariſes our love to God and to man. It is through faith apprehending and laying hold of Chriſt, that we are made the children of God, and therefore we love the Father of whom we are begotten, and the brethren who are begotten of him, and who have obtained like precious faith with us. Believers, who are thus born again of God, and adopted into his family, are cloſely connected and joined together in the bonds of love. Love flowing from the head into all the members, unites them in affection to their heavenly Father, and in affection to all his children; for, being members of the ſame body, they have the ſame care one for another; and if one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

It is certain then, from theſe ſcriptures, that no man can love his neighbour as himſelf, unleſs he be taught it of God. There is ſomething called univerſal benevolence, and the moral ſenſe, and the patriot ſpirit, which pretend to teach brotherly love upon the principles of moral philoſophy, but theſe are falſe baſtard kinds of love, ariſing from ſelfiſh motives, and directed to ſelfiſh ends. And let them appear ever ſo refined and exalted, yet they are not ſanctified affections, becauſe they ſpring not from faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and without faith in him it is impoſſible

poſſible to pleaſe God. Works done before the grace of Chriſt and the inſpiration of his ſpirit are not pleaſant to God. You may do many ſeeming acts of love, you may be the foremoſt in all charitable ſubſcriptions, you may be very kind to your needy relations, and very good to the poor, nay, you may build hoſpitals, and leave your eſtate to endow them, yet if theſe things be not done in faith, they have in them the nature of ſin, and are not acts of brotherly love, but acts of your own proud ſelfiſh ſpirit. God looks at your heart. He ſees upon what principle you are working, and if your principle be wrong, your actions cannot be pleaſing in his ſight. Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good; but a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. This is the main point with reſpect to brotherly love, and this comes to be conſidered in the

Fourth place, under the practical obſervations upon the doctrine of the text. The doctrine is this: Whoever keeps the firſt table will keep the ſecond. If the love of God be in his heart, he will give proof and evidence of it by his unfeigned love of his neighbour, and he will love him as himſelf, not with that vicious ſelf-love which influences the views and actions of all natural men, but with that holy ſanctified affection, which ſprings from, and is guided by, the love of God. If this brotherly love was in every heart, it would turn the world into a paradiſe.

If all men had true heart-love to their neighbour, earth would be heaven: for ſo much love as there is on earth, ſo much of heaven is brought down upon it. The hateful and ſelfiſh tempers of mankind make the world what it is; theſe are the cauſe of all the miſeries in ſociety, and theſe are in all men by nature. Their love centers in ſelf, and ſeeks not another's good but its own. One great deſign of Chriſtianity was to reform their love, by giving them that faith which worketh by love, by love to God for his ineſtimable mercies, and by love to men for the ſake of God; by which means the old ſelfiſh heart becomes a loving heart, and is ever prepared to do all the good it can to the bodies and ſouls of men. This is the true character of a Chriſtian. He wiſhes well to all men, ſpeaks evil of no man, and is ready to every good work. In thought, word, and deed, he is influenced by unfeigned love to his neighbour, whether he be a ſtranger, a friend, or an enemy. Is this your character, my brethren? Have you the true love of your neighbour in your hearts, and are you conſtantly manifeſting it in your lives? How many perſons have we among us, that make great profeſſions of brotherly love, even of univerſal benevolence, and yet they divide the two tables, and make religion conſiſt in keeping the duties of the ſecond. All our moraliſts act upon this plan. They ſpeak and write very prettily about moral

duties,

duties, but they lay the foundation of them upon ſand. They neither build them upon the love of God, nor upon faith in Chriſt Jeſus; and other foundation can no man lay for the love of God, nor upon the grace of the Holy Spirit diſpoſing and enabling them to love God, and then to love their neighbour. Thus theſe men put aſunder what God hath joined together. The love of God and the love of man cannot be ſeparated: for there can be no true brotherly love, but what ſprings from the love of God. Let it ſpring from any other cauſe, there will be ſomething in it ſelfiſh, it will ariſe from private narrow views, and will be directed to mean ends, and be it ever ſo refined and patriot-ſpirited, yet it will be unſanctified; becauſe whatſoever is not of faith is ſin. Without faith the ſinner is under guilt and under ſentence of death, and is as incapable of doing a ſingle act which is good and valid in the court of heaven, as a condemned criminal is of doing any legal act, which would be allowed to be valid in a court of juſtice. The law of God has attainted him of high treaſon, and found him guilty; upon which juſtice has a right to inflict the deſerved puniſhment, and to put the ſentence of the law in force againſt him; but if he own the ſentence to be juſt, and ſue for mercy, and ſeek it through Jeſus Chriſt, relying on his grace and righteouſneſs, then by faith he is pardoned; his attainder is reverſed,

and

and he is capable of doing acts well-pleasing unto God through Jesus Christ his Lord. The moral works done by such a person are acceptable, because his person was first accepted, and he was what they call rectus in curia; but without faith it was impossible that his moral works should please God: "for whatsoever is not of "faith is sin."

But I need not enlarge upon this point. Perhaps there may be none of those persons here. By our presence we declare ourselves to be professors of Christianity, and as such we are nearly concerned in what has been now said. The scripture has drawn our character before we receive the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, and has painted in very expressive colours the inward lineaments of our hearts. It not only describes every fallen man to be without any true love of God or of his neighbour, but also represents him to be at enmity with God, and to be under the power of corrupt inclinations, which are opposite to God's will, and of selfish views, which are destructive of brotherly love. But while the scripture thus describes our malady, it offers us a remedy, which faith receives, and then works by love to God and to man; by love to God in loving him and his will, and by unfeigned love to the brethren shewing itself in every good word and work. There are great complaints in the world of the want of this

brotherly

brotherly love; and indeed there is very little of it to be found any where. But what is the reaſon? Is it not, becauſe there is a great want of the love of God? For ſince brotherly love ſprings from this, as from its only fountain, how can there be love abundant in the ſtreams, if it fail in the fountain? If love does not operate in your life, how can love be in your heart? And if it be not there, what are you? not a Chriſtian. What the ſun would be without light, ſuch is a Chriſtian without love. He has none of the life and ſpirit of Chriſt, and wants the very mark and badge of Chriſt's diſciples. "By this," ſays he, "ſhall all men know that "ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to "another." O Lord, where are thy diſciples at preſent? Haſt thou not ſaid, ye ſhall know them by their love to one another? But upon whom is this mark found? Upon all nominal Chriſtians? No; they are diſtinguiſhed by a contrary temper. But is it not among profeſſors? What profeſſors? We have profeſſors of ſo many denominations, and of ſo many different parties, that it is hard to ſay, who has the narroweſt views, or the moſt party ſpirit; but it is eaſy to ſee at firſt ſight that brotherly love is the peculiar character of few of them. Alas! alas! they have loſt their proper mark, by which they were to be known to be Chriſt's diſciples; and thus the ſcripture is fulfilled, which ſaith, "In

"the

" the latter days the love of many ſhall wax " cold." It is cold indeed, with many; thank God, not with all. There are ſome (although but few), perhaps of every denomination, who ſtill have unfeigned love for the brethren. May the God of love increaſe their numbers.

Since there is ſo little brotherly love in the world, let each of you, my brethren, examine yourſelves, and ſee whether you be Chriſt's diſciples more than in name and profeſſion. Are you known to belong to the houſehold of faith by your love to one another? Do you love your neighbour as yourſelf, with a well-regulated, holy love, ariſing from a right motive, and directed to a right end? If you think you have this love, how did you attain it? Was you taught it of God? Have you been humbled before him under a ſenſe of your guilt, and have you felt the miſery of being enſlaved to your own wicked and ſelfiſh tempers? And did you apply to Chriſt for deliverance? Did he take guilt out of your conſcience, and give you that faith which worketh by love to your reconciled father, and by love to your brethren for his ſake? If you have been thus taught of God, you will alſo be enabled of God to love one another. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more.

But if this be not your experience, then you cannot have the true brotherly love, and without it

it what are you? You are not a Chriſtian; for this commandment have we from Chriſt, that he who loveth God, love his brother alſo. Your want of love to your brother demonſtrates your want of love to God; and conſider what ſtate you are in, while you are not reconciled to God, nor at peace with him. You are under the guilt of all your ſins, and liable to ſuffer the deſerved puniſhment of them. That God, whom you daily provoke, daily ſpares you. He might get himſelf glory in puniſhing ſuch a rebel; but his long-ſuffering bears with you; and what return do you make him for keeping you out of hell? Do you love him, and ſerve him with grateful obedience? No, you attack him with open avowed rebellion, as if you had an arm like God, and was not afraid of the fire of his wrath: and you carry on your war againſt him by declared war againſt your neighbours, indulging the malicious envious tempers, and gratifying the unjuſt deſires of your own ſelfiſh heart. Suppoſe God ſhould call you to his bar while you are in this ſtate: as you have no love for him, you could have no happineſs in beholding or enjoying him; and as you have no love for his family, you could not be happy in their company. You hated them upon earth, and they are ſo much unlike yourſelf, you would hate them in heaven. What then could you meet with at his bar, but what you are prepared

to

to receive, even an eternal ſeparation from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power? And can you think of this without concern? Have you no fear, leſt the wrath of God ſhould abide upon you for ever and ever? What! have you not one wiſh to flee from the wrath to come. Oh dreadful ſtate of hardened ſinners! May the Lord take pity on you, and ſubdue your rebellious hearts by his almighty grace, that you may be brought to the right love of God, and of your neighbour.

Perhaps ſome of you may ſay, I thank God, I am not in this ſtate. I have been made to ſee and to feel my enmity againſt God and againſt man; and I heartily deſire to love both. You have reaſon, indeed to be thankful; for this deſire is a ſign and token of God's love to you. Wait upon him, that you may know and experience his love. He has encouraged you to aſk this grace of him, and has promiſed to give it, upon your aſking. It is his gift; for God is love, and he is more willing to give than you are to aſk. It is one of his choice gifts, which he delights to beſtow upon the children of men, and with the right uſe of which he is well pleaſed. "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the "ſcripture, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as "thyſelf, ye do well." James ii. 8. Ye do well in preſenting this odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well pleaſing unto God. Oh!

wait

wait then upon him, and be found in the ways of his appointment, not to merit his love, it is a free gift, and it is ineſtimable, the price of it is above all the riches of earth and heaven, but wait humbly for the time of his love; and when out of his ſovereign grace he ſheds it abroad in your heart, then he will enable you to love your neighbour as yourſelf. Surely theſe bleſſings are worth your waiting for; eſpecially ſince you are encouraged by thoſe comfortable words, the truth of which many thouſands now alive have found true by happy experience; "They ſhall "not be aſhamed that wait for me, ſaith the "Lord." Iſai. xlix. 23.

Thanks be to his rich and free love, which has fulfilled this ſcripture to ſo many in our days. You, my brethren, who know the love of God, ſhould remember, that as you love him who begat, ſo you ought to love them who are begotten of him. The ſoundneſs of your love to God ſhould be made evident from your acts of love to your fellow creatures; for that faith, which brings you to the knowledge of God's love to your ſoul, ſhould work by love to them; and this work of love proves it, does not make it, but proves it to be a living faith. While it lives it loves. Love is the very breath of faith, and while love breathes in the believer, it diſpoſes him to do all the good he can to the bodies and to the ſouls of his neighbours; for his is heart-

love.

love. He cannot ſee any one ſick, poor, in priſon, naked, or wounded, but love haſtens to his relief. It does not ſay---Be ye well, be ye relieved, &c. but it freely gives them ſuch things as they have need of. My Chriſtian brethren, you know that theſe are the proper offices of brotherly love. Oh! be careful then in the practice of them. If you would have your evidences kept clear for heaven, and your peace and comfort abiding, let your faith be continually working. Exerciſe it upon Chriſt's diſtreſſed members. Go about doing them good. Refuſe no labour of love; for he has commanded, and he has encouraged you to embrace every opportunity. This is the commandment of God, that you ſhould believe on the name of his only begotten Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another, as he gave you commandment; and the day is approaching, when you will hear him ſay---"Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the "leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it "unto me." Keep your faith then working by love; for they cannot be ſeparated. Faith is the root, and love is the fruit; if the root be alive, it will bear fruit, even the abundant fruits of love and charity, to God's glory, and to man's profit.

And as the believer is kindly affectioned with brotherly love to relieve the bodily wants of his neighbour, ſo is he influenced towards his ſpiritual wants with more affection, becauſe the ſoul

ſoul is more precious than the body; at leaſt, if he be not, he ought however to be thus influenced. There is in men a ſtrange remiſſneſs and backwardneſs to the performance of the offices of love, relating to the ſouls of their neighbours: but grace makes them willing and able. It ſweetly inclines and mightily enables them to the ſpiritual acts of brotherly love; but one cannot help lamenting how little grace is exerciſed this way. While worldly people are erecting magnificent hoſpitals, and doing princely acts of charity, oh! how ſhort of them do profeſſors come in their works of charity? You are a profeſſor, you call yourſelf a Chriſtian, and do you not know one of your neighbours who lives in open ſin, and yet you never ſpeak to him of it? You thought, indeed, ſometimes of reproving him; but then, fear, or ſhame, or indolence prevented you. Theſe paſſions were ſtronger in you than brotherly love. And does not this convince you how unlike you are to your bleſſed maſter? Did he ever decline doing good for fear of ſome little inconvenience which might attend it? No, he went about doing good, although at the hazard of his life; and yet your love to Chriſt, and to precious ſouls, is ſo very cold, that you can ſuffer your neighbour to live in ſin, yea perhaps to die in it, without one kind reproof. And haſt thou not then, boaſting profeſſor, great reaſon to examine thyſelf, whether thou be in

the faith? For how canſt thou prove it to be true and alive, ſince it does not work by love? May this humble thee, and put thee upon ſeeking more of the ſpirit and power of Jeſus Chriſt. Perhaps you are the maſter of a family, how do you ſhew your love to your ſervants? You ſee they do your work, and you take care to pay them their wages, and what more do you than publicans and ſinners? But do you watch over their ſouls, inſtructing and admoniſhing them with all gentleneſs and diligence? Have you any family worſhip? Do you pray conſtantly with them, and for them? ſo that the Lord may juſtly ſay of you, as he did of the father of the faithful, "I know Abraham, that he will com-"mand his children, and his houſehold after "him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, "to do juſtice and judgment." God knows, there are few heads of families, who take any care at all of the ſouls of their ſervants; and few indeed do their duty by them in brotherly love. The Lord pardon what is paſt, and reform us for the future in this reſpect. Perhaps you may be a parent, and you take pains enough to provide for the temporal welfare of your children. You riſe up early, and late take reſt, and eat the bread of carefulneſs, that you may get a great fortune for them. And what more do you for them than for your beaſts? You provide for your children's well-being in the world, and do you

UPON THE

CLEANSING VIRTUE

OF

CHRIST's BLOOD.

DISCOURSE X.

UPON THE

CLEANSING VIRTUE

OF

CHRIST'S BLOOD.

DISCOURSE X.

ZECHARIAH xiii. 1.

In that day there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David, *and to the inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *for ſin and for uncleanneſs.*

THEY that be whole need not a phyſician, but the ſick ſtand in need of his advice and help. The perſons, who feel no malady of ſin, ſee not their want of a Saviour. They are not in pain, and therefore they deſire no remedy; but it is otherwiſe with the convinced ſinner. He feels the miſery of ſin. He ſuffers the torment of it in his guilty conſcience, and earneſtly ſeeks for relief. No perſon in exquiſite pain ever cried out for help with greater fervency than he does. He has heard of the almighty phyſician, and of his

his great readineſs to heal all diſtreſſed objects, who come unto him, and therefore he earneſtly implores his aſſiſtance. How comfortable to his afflicted ſoul is ſuch a ſcripture as this, when explained and applied to him by the Spirit of God—" In that day there ſhall be a fountain " opened to the houſe of David, and to the " inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for un- " cleanneſs." He hears the words with joy, and bleſſes God for having opened a fountain for ſuch polluted ſinners, as he is, to waſh in and be clean. He believes the record that God gave of his Son, namely, that his blood cleanſeth from all ſin, and through faith he finds great joy and peace in receiving redemption through the blood of Jeſus, even the forgiveneſs of ſins. But the caſe is quite different with thoſe, who have never been in any concern about their ſouls. They may give a kind of ſimple aſſent to ſuch ſcriptures as this. Perhaps they may be convinced, that they ſhall want to be cleanſed from ſin ſome time or other, but at preſent they ſee no abſolute neceſſity for it. They have no painful ſenſe of the malady of ſin, nor any apprehenſion of their danger; and therefore they give themſelves no uneaſineſs about the great phyſician of ſouls. But the leſs they are concerned for themſelves; the more ought we, who are ſenſible of their danger, to be concerned for them. We ought to preach the law to them, by which is the knowledge

knowledge of ſin, and to ſet before them their pollution and their guilt, and the miſery and puniſhment to which they are ſubject; and we ought to look up to God for his bleſſing, that he would ſet home and apply by his grace to their conſciences, what we ſpeak to the outward ear. And when he has convinced them of the dangerous ſtate in which they live, before they are waſhed in the fountain of Chriſt's blood, and they earneſtly deſire and pray to be waſhed in it, then we may ſafely preach to them the comforts of the goſpel, and the infinite riches of a Saviour's love. Then we may exhort them to waſh and be clean; though their ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow, when waſhed in the fountain of the Redeemer's blood; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool. May the Lord God, who opened this fountain, be with us this day to apply its cleanſing healing virtue. May his good Spirit awaken the careleſs and profane ſinner to ſee his pollution and guilt; may he increaſe the deſires and ſtrengthen the longings of thoſe who are waiting for the blood of ſprinkling, and may he edify and comfort his own people by means of what ſhall be ſaid in order to determine

Firſt, What the fountain is, which is mentioned in the text.

Secondly, The time when it was opened, here ſaid to be a particular day.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The wonderful property of this fountain---it could cleanſe and do away the pollution of ſins or the deepeſt dye; and then

Fourthly, By what means and in what way ſinners receive and partake of its cleanſing property.

It will not require many words to determine what the fountain is. There is a circumſtance mentioned in the text, which will eaſily ſettle this point. It is ſaid to be opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs: Now what fountain could it be, which had the wonderful property of cleanſing from ſin? The ſcripture has laid down this infallible rule; without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion; and the ſhedding of what blood ever obtained remiſſion? Did the blood of the ſacrifices under the law? No. "To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto "me, ſaith the Lord? I delight not in the blood "of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats, Iſaiah i. "11. For I deſired mercy and not ſacrifice, "and the knowledge of God more than burnt-"offerings." Hoſ. vi. 6. He commanded ſacrifice, but not in preference to mercy. Men were not to reſt in the ſacrifice, as if its blood could atone, but to look with faith at the great ſacrifice which the mercy of God had provided, and which was to make a full atonement for ſin, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs. This was the ſacrifice of the lamb of God. No blood,

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but his, ever did or could atone. If all the cattle upon a thouſand hills had been offered up, they could not have taken away the leaſt ſin. If a man had given the fruit of his body for the ſin of his ſoul, ſtill his ſin would have remained. If he had repented, his repentance without faith in the blood of Chriſt could not have obtained remiſſion. There would be occaſion to repent of his repentance. If he was to ſhed rivers of tears, yea, tears of blood, theſe very tears would want waſhing. Nothing can cleanſe and do away ſin, but ſome divine and infinitely precious blood; and in whom is there any ſuch? Not in a mere creature. A creature has blood, but none that has any virtue to cleanſe a ſinner from the pollution and guilt of ſin. This is the property of the Lamb of God, who, being both God and man in the perſon of one Chriſt, did thereby give a divine and infinite virtue to the blood which he ſhed, ſo that it can cleanſe from all ſin. Here then is the fountain. It is the moſt precious blood of Chriſt, which is always ſending out its virtue, as a fountain is always ſending out water. Its cleanſing ſtreams have never ſtopped, ſince there was ſin to cleanſe; and they can never be exhauſted. Whoever waſhes therein ſhall be made clean, let him have been ever ſo defiled or polluted. The pool of Bethesda was a lively image of this fountain. After the angel went down and troubled the water, then whoſoever firſt ſtept

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in was made whole of whatſoever diſeaſe he had. As this cured every bodily, ſo does the blood of Chriſt cure every ſpiritual, diſeaſe: for it takes away ſin, which is the cauſe of all diſeaſes, and obtains eternal redemption.

Are any of you, my brethren, thoroughly ſenſible of the defiling nature of ſin, and do you find how offenſive it makes you in the eyes of an holy God? Has the angel of the covenant come down and troubled your conſciences, and are you convinced that nothing can cleanſe you but the blood of Jeſus Chriſt? Then believe his word and rely upon his promiſe, that if your polluted ſouls be waſhed in this fountain, how filthy and defiled ſoever they be, they ſhall be made clean: for it can cleanſe from all ſin. Are your pollutions numerous, of a long continuance, and of the deepeſt die? The blood of Chriſt can infallibly cleanſe them and make them as white as ſnow: becauſe it partakes of the infinite and divine nature of the God-man Chriſt Jeſus. He who opened this fountain for ſin, was God and man united in one Chriſt, whereby the actions of the one nature may properly be aſcribed to and predicated of the other. The man Jeſus had blood to ſhed, but he who ſhed it was God as well as man; and therefore it is called by St. Paul "the blood of God:" for as the reaſonable ſoul and fleſh is one man, ſo God and man is one Chriſt. The manhood ſuffered

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and bled, the Godhead merited infinitely by thoſe ſufferings, and by that blood-ſhedding, and ſo the one Chriſt, who ſuffered and bled, merited infinitely, according to what the Apoſtle John ſays, " That God laid down his life for us ;" and the ends and purpoſes for which God laid it down, could not poſſibly be defeated. Hear this, ye poor guilty ſinners ; whoſe conſciences are troubled with a ſenſe of your many and great pollutions. The Lord God has opened a fountain for ſuch as you are, to waſh in and be clean, and he has given to it a divine and almighty virtue to cleanſe all manner of ſins. His power is preſent to make it an all-perfect cleanſer. Oh that God may enable you to make uſe of it. Is it not your hearts' deſire, that you may be made clean ? And here are the means. The fountain ſtands open. What hinders you then from waſhing it, and having your conſciences purged from deep works ? You cannot doubt of its virtue. Has it not cleanſed ſinners, who were once as black as hell, a Manaſſeh, a Mary Magdalen, a Saul ? Put it then to the trial. Believe the record which God has given of it. Apply it for the cleanſing of your ſouls, and it will infallibly take effect. All the ſinners from Adam to Chriſt, who have been admitted into the preſence and kingdom of God, were cleanſed from every ſpot and ſtain of ſin in this fountain ; and all the ſinners from Chriſt to the end of the

world muſt waſh their robes in the ſame fountain, if they appear in ſpotleſs purity before God. But although this fountain has had its all-cleanſing virtue ever ſince the fall, yet there was a fixed time in the council of God, called in the text in that day, when the immaculate Lamb of God ſhould come into the world, and ſhed his blood, and put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf; and this brings me to my

Second head,—Under which I purpoſed to conſider the time when this fountain was opened, here ſaid to be a particular day. And this was certainly the day when the Redeemer ſuffered and bled upon the croſs, which being fixed and unalterable in the decrees of the moſt high God, they, who lived before Chriſt gave himſelf an offering for ſin, were ſaved by faith in him, as we are ſince he was offered: for the merits of his ſacrifice looked backward as well as forward, and like as the ſun ſends out light in every direction, ſo did the efficacy of our Lord's ſacrifice. It communicated its cleanſing qualities, as well to thoſe who lived before, as to thoſe who lived ſince Chriſt made his ſoul an offering for ſin. But nevertheleſs there was a day, a preciſe determinate time for his offering. Chriſt was the lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, ſlain typically in every ſacrifice, but in the fulneſs of time he came, and was really ſlain, and the day of his ſufferings was

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the day when the fountain for ſin and for uncleanneſs was opened, which is clearly determined by the context: for in the foregoing chapter the prophet is ſpeaking of an extraordinary mourning in the land of Iſrael, and he introduces his deſcription with theſe words: "And I will pour upon the houſe of David, "and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem the "Spirit of grace and of ſupplications, and they "ſhall look upon me, whom they have pierced." Theſe words are applied by an infallible expoſitor to our Lord's being pierced upon the croſs: for St. John ſays, "When the ſoldiers came "to Jeſus, and ſaw that he was dead already, "they brake not his legs, but one of them, "with a ſpear, pierced his ſide, and forthwith "came out blood and water: for theſe things were done, that the ſcripture ſhould be fulfilled, "A bone of him ſhall not be broken." And again another ſcripture ſaith, "They ſhall look "on him, whom they have pierced." From hence it is evident, that the fountain was opened on the day of Chriſt's ſufferings, here pointed out by this diſtinguiſhing mark; namely, the ſoldiers' piercing his ſide, from whence there flowed blood and water. When this fixed day was come, and Chriſt had ſuffered whatever the hand and counſel of God had determined before ſhould be done to him, then his blood had an all-cleanſing virtue. What he once

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ſhed was for ever meritorious. It was ſo abſolutely perfect, that he need not ſhed it any more. The ſacrifice of that one day was ſufficient to ſatisfy all the demands of law and juſtice; "ſo that Chriſt need not offer himſelf often, as "the high-prieſt entered into the holy place "every year with the blood of others: for then "muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the founda-"tion of the world; but now once in the end "of the world hath he appeared to put away ſin "by the ſacrifice of himſelf." Once, the juſt ſuffered for the unjuſt, and the blood, which he ſhed on that day, had ſuch an infinite cleanſing virtue, as to make ſcarlet-crimſon ſins as white as ſnow. The ends for which he bled could not poſſibly be defeated: for he was God and man united in one Chriſt, and the one Chriſt merited infinitely by the ſhedding of his moſt precious blood, and it was indeed ſhed as abundantly as if it had flowed from a fountain. From the time that his agony and bloody ſweat began in the garden until he expired upon the croſs, he was a bleeding victim, wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities. When he was buffeted and ſcourged; when he was crowned with thorns, and their ſharp points were ſtruck into his head by the barbarous ſoldiers; when the croſs was laid upon him, and the weight of it opened his wounds and made them bleed afreſh; when the nails went through his

his hands and feet, and he hung for ſix hours bleeding upon the croſs; then was the moſt precious blood ſhed, which is the only fountain to waſh away ſin and uncleanneſs. Sinners, conſider the great need you have of this fountain, and the ineſtimable love of Chriſt, who opened it for ſuch as you are. He calls upon you, he intreats you to view him, as he hung bleeding upon the croſs in his bitter paſſion—"Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? be-"hold and ſee, if there be any ſorrow like un-"to my ſorrow, which is done unto me, where-"with the Lord hath afflicted me in the day "of his fierce anger." This is his earneſt requeſt to you who are paſſing by and minding other things. He would have you to ſtop, to lay aſide all other concerns, and to employ your thoughts upon his unparalleled ſufferings. Oh hearken then unto him! Look upon this man of ſorrows. View him tormented, bleeding, dying, and then aſk your heart, Why does the innocent Lamb of God thus ſuffer? Was it not that there might be a fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs? And how then are you affected with the ſhedding of that blood, which can cleanſe from all ſin? If grace be ſtirring in your hearts, you will mourn with a godly ſorrow for your ſins, which occaſioned his bitter ſufferings, as it is written in the chapter before the text—"I will pour upon the houſe of

" David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, " the ſpirit of grace and ſupplications, and they " ſhall look upon me, whom they have pierced, " and they ſhall mourn for him, as one mourn- " eth for his only ſon, and ſhall be in bitter- " neſs for him as one that is in bitterneſs " for his firſt-born." As tender parents are affected with the death of an only ſon and of a firſt-born, ſo ſhall the holy mourners in Sion be affected with the wounding and piercing of Chriſt. They ſhall be in bitterneſs not only for his death, but for the cauſe of it. Their ſins were the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God, and it is their conſtant language—" My " ſins pierced Chriſt with a thouſand ſorrows in " the day of his ſuffering, while he was wound- " ed for my tranſgreſſions and bruiſed for mine " iniquities; and yet vile, ungrateful wretch that " I am, daily am I piercing him with my ſins, " and making his wounds bleed afreſh." Whoever can ſpeak theſe words feelingly will mourn after a godly ſort, and will know how to value that precious blood which has merit and efficacy to ſave him from his baſe ingratitude, as well as from his other ſins. He will look upon every one of our Lord's wounds as a fountain opened for the purifying of ſin and of uncleanneſs; for every ſin is of a polluting nature, and wants cleanſing. Nothing can be ſo loathſome in the eyes of a holy God, as ſin. A leper, covered

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over with ſores, and ulcers, is not more offenſive in our ſight, than he that is defiled with the leproſy of ſin is in the ſight of God. He is not only of purer eyes than to behold it, but he alſo rejects the ſinner for it, as filthy and abominable altogether; and he will be rejected for ever, unleſs he be convinced of the defiling nature of ſin, and deſire to be cleanſed from its pollution. When theſe deſires come from the Holy Spirit, he will ſtrengthen them, until the ſinner, being juſtified by the blood of Chriſt, be made clean and righteous altogether. But this point comes more particularly to be treated of in the

Third place, Under the conſideration of the wonderful property of the fountain mentioned in the text, it could cleanſe, and take away the pollution of ſins of the deepeſt dye. The fountain is the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, which is able to cleanſe from ſin by the divine ordinance and appointment. The ever-bleſſed Trinity have given it an almighly power in order to its anſwering all the purpoſes of cleanſing; and therefore it is called by the apoſtle "the blood of the "everlaſting covenant," becauſe the eternal Three entered into a covenant, and by an eternal purpoſe decreed to bring many ſons unto glory through the obedience and blood-ſhedding of Jeſus Chriſt. He, being a perſon in the Godhead co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, undertook, as their repreſentative, to obey

the law for them, and to ſuffer the penalties, to ſhed the blood, and to die the death which they deſerved, and thus to ſatisfy all the demands which his Father's juſtice had upon them. The Father accepted him as their ſubſtitute, and was well-pleaſed with them for his ſake, even before he came in the fleſh; and when he did come in the fulneſs of time to put away ſin by the infinitely perfect ſacrifice of himſelf; and when he ſaid upon the Croſs, "it is finiſhed," then the blood of the everlaſting covenant made a full and perfect atonement for their ſins. Of this there can be no doubt, becauſe he roſe from the grave in a public character, as the firſt fruit of the dead, and becauſe he afterwards aſcended up on high to give gifts unto men, and according to his moſt true promiſe he gave his royal gifts, even to the rebellious. He ſent them the Holy Ghoſt the comforter, whoſe office in the covenant it was to awaken ſinners, dead aſleep in ſin, to convince them of their guilt and danger, and to bring them to the blood of ſprinkling to be made clean. When the Holy Spirit thus graciouſly ſtirs up and diſpoſes them to be cleanſed in the fountain, which was opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, why ſhould not they inſtantly make uſe of it? The fountain can cleanſe them. It is almighty to cleanſe from all ſin. The holy, bleſſed and glorious Trinity have covenanted to give an infinitely puryfying virtue to it. Although

though Jeſus alone ſhed his blood, yet the Father covenanted to accept it, and the Holy Spirit covenanted to apply it and to make it effectual to the ſinner's heart; ſo that the whole Trinity have appointed it to be an infallible cleanſer. And let troubled conſciences remember, that the divine virtue and almighty power of the godhead will now work with the blood of the everlaſting covenant to make it effectual for every end and purpoſe for which it was ſhed; yea, even the Father's juſtice, from which they had moſt to fear, is as much bound to ſave thoſe who ſeek to be cleanſed by the blood of Chriſt, as his mercy: for infinite juſtice has been ſatisfied with the ſhedding of this blood. All its demands have been fully anſwered, and juſtice and mercy are now alike engaged to receive thoſe ſinners, who come to Jeſus to be made clean. Think of this, thou afflicted ſoul, toſſed with doubts and fears and not comforted: Why cannot that blood ſatisfy thy conſcience, which has ſatisfied the infinite juſtice of God? The Lord deliver thee from unbelief, and help thee to rely upon the blood of the everlaſting covenant, until thou find every thing that is ſaid of it in ſcripture to be infallibly true by thine own experience.

The wonderful property then of this fountain comes from hence, that there is in it the moſt precious blood of Chriſt, which has a divine virtue

virtue and power to cleanſe, as the whole ſcripture bears teſtimony. Under the cremonial diſpenſation, whenever any perſon had broken the law, he was pronounced unclean, and was ſhut out of the camp, until he was cleanſed by blood. He was to bring his ſacrifice to the prieſt, who was to ſlay it, and then to ſprinkle the blood of it upon the unclean, that he might be ſanctified to the purifying of the fleſh. Thus the Moſaic ceremonies, which were figures of good things to come, then taught the ſinner, that as his ſin ſhut him out of the congregation of the Lord's people below, ſo would it ſhut him out of the congregation above, into which nothing unclean can enter; and then they farther taught him the infinite efficacy of Chriſt's blood to do away ſin: for if the blood of the ſacrifices could cleanſe outwardly, how much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf, without ſpot to God, purge the conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God.

Thus the ceremonial law ſhewed, that blood could cleanſe, and referred the ſinner to the blood of the Lamb of God, by faith in which he might be made clean. The New Teſtament refers him to the ſame fountain, and has given ſuch deſcriptions of it, as ought to ſilence doubts and fears, and to enable every convinced ſinner to rely upon its virtue, and to waſh and be clean.

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All that Jeſus has purchaſed; all that the Holy Spirit has to apply; all the graces of time, and all the bleſſings of eternity, are aſcribed to the merit of his moſt precious blood-ſhedding. Thus the ſcripture ſets forth its ineſtimable value. By it the price of our redemption was paid. The debt was ſo immenſe, for which juſtice had ſeized upon our perſons and eſtates, that we could not be redeemed with corruptible things, ſuch as ſilver and gold, but with the precious blood of Chriſt. The blood alone of that God-man was ſufficient to pay our ranſom, and he paid it to the utmoſt farthing, as theſe ſcriptures teſtify. "In whom we have redemption "thro' his blood." Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. And as the redeemed of the Lord could thus ſay by faith, "we have redemption through his blood," ſo we read in Rev. v. that the redeemed of the Lord in heaven ſung a new ſong, when the ſealed book was given to the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, who alone prevailed to open the book, and to looſe the ſeals thereof, ſaying, "Thou art worthy to "take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof: "for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to "God by thy blood." Through his blood alſo we have remiſſion and forgiveneſs of ſins. Without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion, and no blood could merit remiſſion, but his, as he ſays himſelf, "This is my blood of the new teſtament,

"which

" which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of " ſins." Matt. xxvi. 28. And the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of himſelf and of the Coloſſians, ſays, by it they had remiſſion, " In whom we have " redemption through his blood, even the for- " giveneſs of ſins." Col. i. 14. And the Apoſtle John thus praiſes Chriſt for this bleſſing, " Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from " our ſins in his own blood, be glory and domi- " nion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6. And as believers have redemption and remiſſion of ſins through the moſt precious blood of Chriſt, ſo have they alſo through it another ineſtimable privilege, even free juſtification, according to what is written, Rom. v. 8, 9. " While we " were yet enemies, Chriſt died for us, much " more then, being now juſtified by his blood, " we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him." And we are thus juſtified and ſaved through faith in his blood: " For we are juſtified freely " by grace through the redemption that is in " Jeſus Chriſt, whom God hath ſet forth to be " a propitiation through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 24, 25. And being thus juſtified by faith in his blood we have another privilege, greater than the world can give, and ſuch as the world cannot take away, even peace with God: " But now in Chriſt Jeſus, ye who ſometimes " were far off, are made nigh by the blood of " Chriſt: for he is our peace." Eph. ii. 13, 14.

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He was conſtituted and appointed by the covenant the prince of peace, who was to reconcile God and man: "For it pleaſed the Father that "in him ſhould all fullneſs dwell, and having "made peace through the blood of his croſs, "by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, "by him, I ſay, whether they be things in earth, "or things in heaven." Col. i. 19, 20. And when the ſinner is reconciled to the Father by faith in the blood of his Son, then the ſenſe of this peace will enable him to rejoice in God through Jeſus Chriſt his Lord, by whom he hath now received the atonement. And when he is thus redeemed, and his ſins are forgiven, and perſon juſtified, and the peace of God rules in his heart, then there is another bleſſed privilege received by the blood of Chriſt, even ſanctification. "The bodies of thoſe beaſts," ſays the Apoſtle, "whoſe blood is brought into the ſanc-"tuary by the high-prieſt for ſin, are burnt "without the camp; whereof Jeſus alſo, that "he might ſanctify the people with his own "blood, ſuffered without the gate." Heb. xiii. 11, 12. His people are delivered from the dominion, as well as from the guilt of ſin by the merit of his blood: "For he gave himſelf for "them, that he might redeem them from all "iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar "people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14. He gave himſelf to death for them, that

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he might redeem them from the power of iniquity, as well as from the guilt and puniſhment of it, as the Apoſtle witneſſes, Col. i, 21, 22. "And you that were ſometimes alienated, and "enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet "now hath he reconciled in the body of his "fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and "unblameable and unreproveable, in his ſight." And when believers are thus through obedience and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt renewed day by day in the ſpirit of their minds, then they have another exceeding great and precious privilege, namely, liberty of approaching God, and acceſs with confidence unto him, as their reconciled Father. Their happineſs in this reſpect is greater than can be expreſſed. They can caſt all their care upon him, and thereby eaſe themſelves of the burden, and they can lay all their wants and complaints before him, knowing that their God will ſupply all their wants out of the riches of his glory in Chriſt Jeſus. And this ineſtimable privilege comes to them through the blood of Chriſt, as the Apoſtle has proved, Heb. x. 19, 20, &c. "Having therefore, bre-"thren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the "blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way, "which he hath conſecrated for us through the "vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh, and having an "high-prieſt over the houſe of God, let us

"draw

" draw near with a true heart in full aſſuranc
" of faith."

Theſe are ſome of the privileges which believers receive from the moſt precious blood-ſhedding of Jeſus Chriſt; and are not theſe ſufficient to demonſtrate the infinitely cleanſing virtue of the fountain of his blood? For by it they are waſhed from every pollution and defilement of ſin, and are preſented without ſpot or blemiſh before God. Did ſin bring them into captivity? The blood of Chriſt redeems them from all their enemies, who led them captive, from ſin and ſatan, from death and hell. Did ſin bring guilt into the conſcience? The ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus takes it out, and ſpeaks pardon and forgiveneſs. Did ſin make us unrighteous, and condemn us at God's bar? There is now no condemnation to them, who are juſtified by the blood of Chriſt. Did ſin provoke a holy God, and arm his juſtice to execute the pains and penalties of the broken law upon the tranſgreſſors? Chriſt has made peace by the blood of the croſs, and he gives them peace in their conſciences, when they are juſtified by faith. Are we by nature ſold under ſin, and under its power and dominion? The blood of Chriſt has merit and efficacy in it to purge our conſciences from dead works to ſerve the living God. Did ſin ſhut the door of mercy againſt us, ſo that God would receive none of our prayers or ſervices?

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The blood of Chriſt has opened a new and living way, and believers may with boldneſs enter into the holieſt with their petitions: for whatever they aſk of the Father in his Son's name, he will give it them. Thus the blood of Chriſt ſaves from all iniquity. Whatever pollution or guilt iniquity had brought upon the ſoul, all is done away in the fountain of his blood. And theſe ſcriptures have ſo particularly deſcribed its virtue, that convinced ſinners might have ſtrong encouragement to rely upon its power to cleanſe from all ſin: for the Lord God has appointed it for this purpoſe, and it cannot fail of anſwering it; becauſe he is almighty to render his own appointment effectual. The blood of Chriſt cleanſes by a divine virtue, which nothing can reſiſt. God has engaged and promiſed that his almighty power ſhall work in the application of this blood, and that not only in the preſent life, but alſo in the next. He has given to it an infinite and eternal virtue. It can cleanſe for ever. Oh! doubt not then of any leſſer virtue aſcribed to it in ſcripture, ſince it has the greateſt that poſſibly can be. Surely it can cleanſe in time, ſince it can cleanſe to eternity. "Chriſt by his own blood "entered in once into the holy place, having "obtained eternal redemption for us. Heb. ix. "12. For by one offering he hath perfected for "ever them that are ſanctified." Heb. x. 14. And when the beloved Apoſtle ſaw in a viſion

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the great multitude, whom no man could number, ſtanding before the throne and before the lamb, cloathed with white robes and palms in their hands, one of the elders aſked him, "What "are theſe which are arrayed in white robes, "and whence came they? And I ſaid unto "him, Sir, thou knoweſt. And he ſaid unto "me, There are they who come out of great "tribulation, and have waſhed their robes and "made them white in the blood of the lamb." Rev. vii. 14. Theſe precious robes, in which they appear before God, and ſtand confirmed for ever and ever in bliſs, were waſhed and made white in the blood of the lamb, and this gives them an eternal purity and an endleſs glory.

Has not the fountain then, which was opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, a divine property, ſince believers receive from it all the graces of time and all the bleſſings of eternity? The ſcriptures which I have quoted, aſcribe to it the wonderful power of cleanſing from all ſin, and that for ever. Sins of the greateſt guilt, ſcarlet-crimſon ſins, whoſe deep dye cannot be taken out by any other means, waſhed in the blood of the lamb, become as white as ſnow: And the fountain, which has this infinite virtue, ſtands open night and day. It cleanſes freely, without money and without price. Whoſoever will, let him come and be made clean. The Spirit and

the bride invite him, and ſay, Come, and let him that heareth ſay, Come, and let him that deſires to be cleanſed, come. Come, and try its virtue, and it will infallibly ſucceed. Though thouſands, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſinners have waſhed in it, and been made clean; yet it has loſt none of its virtue. Still it is almighty to do away ſin. Whoſoever is waſhed in the blood of Chriſt is made clean and pure to all eternity. My brethren, do you believe this? And do you deſire to experience its cleanſing virtue? Have you been convinced of the polluting nature of ſin, and how it has defiled your ſouls, and rendered them in the ſight of a holy God more filthy and abominable than the moſt loathſome object is in our eyes, and would you be made clean freely by the blood of the Lamb of God? is this the prayer of your heart? "I "am convinced that god is of purer eyes than to "behold the leaſt iniquity, and I am nothing but "iniquity. "Oh! that the Lamb of God would "take pity on me, and out of his mere love and "mercy cleanſe my polluted ſoul from every ſpot "and ſtain of ſin. I believe nothing elſe can "cleanſe me, but his moſt precious blood, and "it cannot cleanſe, unleſs it be applied and re-"ceived by faith: Lord, apply it then for thy "mercy's ſake, and waſh my ſoul in the foun-"tain which was opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs."

"neſs." If theſe be your real deſires, you will follow me, profitably, to the conſideration of the

Fourth particular I was to treat of, namely, By what means and in what way ſinners receive and partake of its cleanſing property. Although Chriſt has ſhed his blood, and although it can cleanſe from all ſin; yet it cannot cleanſe, unleſs it be applied. You can have no benefit from it, unleſs it be ſprinkled upon your conſciences. By the ſhedding of it he obtained merit to cleanſe, but the efficacy of it in cleanſing comes from the application. The law pointed out this in the ſprinkling of the blood of the ſacrifices, and particularly in the cleanſing of the leper. When the prieſt had examined him and found the plague of the leproſy was healed, then the leper was to bring his ſacrifice, and it was offered for him, and its blood was ſhed, but he was not pronounced legally clean, until the blood was ſprinkled upon him. The ſhedding of the blood did not cleanſe without the application. And theſe figures of the law are applied to Chriſt in the New Teſtament. The Apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of the ſprinkling of the heart from an evil conſcience, and the Apoſtle Peter ſhews what it is which is able thus to cleanſe the heart, namely, the ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. This ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel. Able's blood cried for vengeance, but Chriſt's

Chriſt's blood cries for mercy, and when it is applied, it ſprinkles the heart from an evil conſcience, and purges it from dead works to ſerve the living God.

This conſideration brings us to meditate upon the office of the Holy Spirit. As Chriſt covenanted to ſhed his blood, ſo the Holy Spirit covenanted to apply the merits of it, and to render it effectual to the ſinner's heart. This is his office-character: he was to take of the things of Chriſt, and to ſhew them unto us, to ſhew us our want of them, and then to ſhew us our intereſt in them. And in the preſent caſe he was to convince ſinners that they wanted cleanſing, and that there was a fountain opened for uncleanneſs, and by his grace he enables them to waſh and be clean. As there can be no outward waſhing away of any pollution, but by an outward application; ſo there can be no inward cleanſing, but by his ſpiritual application. If there was a bath famous for curing ſome particular diſeaſe, you know it could not cure the diſeaſed perſon, unleſs he was bathed in it: ſo neither can this fountain. It was opened for uſe, and whoever is cleanſed by it, muſt be waſhed in it, inwardly and ſpiritually, by the Holy Spirit. He applies, and faith receives the benefit of that blood, which cleanſeth from all ſin: for the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of Chriſt, ſays, "Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation

"through

" through faith in his blood." Rom. iii. 25. The ſhedding of his blood had merit to cleanſe, but faith apprehends it and receives its cleanſing virtue. That faith, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, and is wrought in the heart by his operation, relies upon the blood of Chriſt, and puts its whole truſt and confidence in its power to cleanſe, and then finds the heart ſprinkled with it from an evil conſcience, guilt being taken out, and peace brought in, with love and joy, and all the graces of the Spirit of God.

From what has been ſaid, it appears, that there is a fountain open for ſin and for uncleanneſs, and that the blood of Jeſus Chriſt can cleanſe from all ſin. It had this virtue given it by the covenant of grace, when the holy, bleſſed, and glorious Trinity agreed to give their power to it, and nothing can reſiſt the power of the Godhead. He who ſhed it was God and man in one perſon. As God, he was co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, and when he took our nature, that in it he might obey and ſuffer for ſinners, nothing could be wanting to render his obedience and ſufferings abſolutely complete: for all the works of God are perfect; nothing can be added to them, or taken from them. When Jeſus ſhed his blood upon the croſs, it was the will of the ever bleſſed Trinity, that this blood ſhould be of infinite efficacy to take away ſin. It cannot want power to cleanſe, becauſe the whole power of

the Godhead is engaged to make it effectual. It is the blood of the everlaſting covenant. The Son has ſhed it, and the Father has received it as a full ſatisfaction and atonement for ſin, and the application of it is now in the hand of the eternal and almighty Spirit; and when he applies it, and gives the ſinner faith to rely upon it, what can then reſiſt its power, or hinder its efficacy? My brethren, how do you find your hearts affected with theſe great truths? Do you ſee the polluting nature of ſin, and do you deſire to be cleanſed from it in the fountain of Chriſt's blood? And do you therefore deſire it, that you may be made holy as well as righteous? Would you have the blood of Chriſt to ſave you by its efficacy from the dominion of ſin, as well as to ſave you by its merit from the guilt of ſin? Sirs, what ſay your hearts to theſe things? Do you really wiſh to be cleanſed from the power, as well as from the pollution of ſin? If you do not wiſh for it, what do you think of the text? Is it true that there is a fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, and has the blood of Chriſt the cleanſing virtue here aſcribed to it? Can it take out the guilt of ſins of the deepeſt dye? Are ſcarlet-crimſon ſins waſhed in it, as white as ſnow? Surely they are: for it can cleanſe from all ſin. By the ſhedding of his blood, Chriſt obtained infinite merit to cleanſe ſinners; but in order to their being cleanſed it

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muſt be applied, and the application is now made by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Has he then applied it to you or not? This is the main point. Have you been waſhed in this fountain and made clean? What are you the better for its cleanſing others, if it never cleanſe your ſouls? You can be benefited only from its application to you in particular, and by your experiencing the power of it in your own hearts. Let each of us then examine ourſelves concerning this particular, and may we do it through the aſſiſtance of God with profit and improvement.

1. It is not unlikely, but there may be ſome perſons here who are not thoroughly acquainted with the defiling nature of ſin, and who never heartily deſired to be cleanſed from it. This is the caſe of all unawakened ſinners. They ſee not the pollution of their hearts and lives, and therefore they are eaſy and content in their preſent ſtate, without ever deſiring to be cleanſed by the blood of Chriſt. Does any one's conſcience ſpeak to him at preſent, and ſay—"This is my "caſe; I have not been cleanſed from my ſins, "nor do I deſire it. My ſins are ſo ſweet and "pleaſing to me, that I ſhould be very unhappy "if I was to part with them." But are they more ſweet and pleaſant than heaven, and would you part with heaven, rather than part with them? Conſider this matter a little. You muſt part with one or the other: for hear what God

ſays of you in his word. You are the objects of his hatred. "Thou, O God! (ſays the Pſalmiſt) "hateſt all workers of iniquity." Pſalm v. 5. Yea, ſo great is his hatred, that he cannot ſuffer you to appear before him. "Thou art of purer "eyes, ſays the Prophet, than to behold evil, "and canſt not look upon iniquity." Hab. i. 13. And if you die in your iniquity, without the blood of ſprinkling, you can never enter into heaven: "For no unclean perſon hath any in-"heritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of "God." Eph. v. 5. To which agree the words of St. John in his deſcription of the heavenly Jeruſalem, "there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it "any thing that defileth." This awful ſcripture will be fulfilled in you. In no wiſe ſhall you enter into the city of the living God, unleſs your polluted ſouls be waſhed in the Redeemer's blood. You will be ſhut out of his preſence and glory, and your eternal habitation will be with unclean ſpirits, in the regions of torment and deſpair.

But bad though your preſent ſtate be, yet the goſpel ſets before you perfect deliverance. You are invited to come and be made clean. The fountain is open, and if you now find it in your heart to make uſe of it, you may be waſhed in it without money and without price. All is free. Your ſins ſhall be freely pardoned, and your pollutions freely cleanſed. Free grace ſhall

do

do all for you, and all in you. And this day you have an offer of all its bleſſings. Cloſe in with it, and they are all yours. But if you now reject them, you cannot pretend that you never heard of your danger: for you have now been warned of it. You cannot plead your ignorance of the merits of Chriſt's blood: for you have now heard what great things the ſcripture ſays of it. From it are received all the graces of time, and all the bleſſings of eternity; and you have been invited to come, and to be cleanſed freely in the fountain, that was opened for ſin, and for uncleanneſs. If then you ſtill refuſe to be waſhed in this fountain, you are without excuſe: for if you reject this wilfully, and harden your hearts againſt it, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries. Meditate upon this ſcripture. Think ſeriouſly what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. And may the eternal Spirit ſet in with this conſideration, and ſo effectually convince you of the pollution and guilt of your ſins, that you may ſeek to be made clean, and may find the blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſing you from all ſin.

2. Are there any of you, my brethren, who are now deſiring to be made clean, and to be waſhed from all your ſins? For you the fountain ſtands open, and what ſhould hinder you from

making uſe of it? Do you doubt of its power to cleanſe you? Remember it is the blood of the everlaſting covenant. It cleanſes in virtue of the covenant of the ever bleſſed Trinity, and conſequently by the power of the Godhead. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have agreed to make it almighty to do away ſin; ſo that it cannot cleanſe only in time, but it can alſo cleanſe for ever and ever. This is the plain doctrine of ſcripture, and if you believe it, why do you not find great joy and peace in believing it?

Perhaps you think it can cleanſe, but you are afraid it is not appointed for your cleanſing. Nay, my brethren, reaſon not againſt your own comforts. For whom was it appointed, if not for you, who ſee your want of it, and who are deſirous of experiencing its divine power? You have the warrant of God's word, authoriſing you to waſh and be clean. The text ſays, the fountain was for the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for the profeſſing members of the viſible church, that whenever any of them were convinced of their uncleanneſs, they might make uſe of this fountain, and have their hearts cleanſed from an evil conſcience. Oh! reject not then the offered bleſſing. Take it upon the warrant and authority of God's word, and doubt not but the fountain is open for you.

Why then are you not cleanſed in it? Are you afraid that your ſins are ſo many and ſo great that you cannot be made clean? As to their number, it can cleanſe from all ſin, and as to their greatneſs, it can take out the guilt of ſcarlet-crimſon ſins, the greateſt that poſſibly can be; therefore this is no objection. You may come with all your ſins and be waſhed freely from all in the fountain of Chriſt's blood.

Come then—But you draw back, you fear it would be preſumption in ſuch a ſinner as you are. What! Is it preſumption to believe in the word of God, which cannot be broken, and to rely upon the promiſes of God, which are as unchangeable as himſelf? No. It is glorifying God, and honouring his word. Whereas you make God a liar by your falſe modeſty, as if he could break his word to you, and as if you might be diſappointed, when you claimed the fulfilling of his promiſes. My brethren, theſe things cannot be. God's word and promiſes are like himſelf, without any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning, and whatever they offer you, is yours, when you rely upon him for the receiving of it from his free grace. And ſince you have the authority of God's word and promiſes to ſilence your doubts and fears, are you reſolved in the ſtrength of grace to rely upon them? If you be, then they ſhall be made good to you. Heaven and earth

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ſhall paſs away, rather than one tittle of them ſhall fail. Your robes ſhall be waſhed in the blood of the lamb, and whatever graces and bleſſings Jeſus has to give his people ſhall be yours in time and in eternity.

3. Perhaps ſome perſons may enquire, Of what uſe is this fountain to believers? The uſes of it are many and great. All their graces flow from it, all their duties are to be waſhed in it, and all their comforts are maintained by it. Surely then it is of great and infinite ſervice to believers. Under the third head of this diſcourſe I conſidered the high character given in ſcripture of this fountain. From it are received redemption, forgiveneſs of ſins, juſtification, peace with God, ſanctification, freedom of acceſs to God, as a reconciled Father, eternal redemption, and the robe of everlaſting righteouſneſs, in which the ſaints ſtand confirmed in bliſs. All theſe graces and bleſſings flow from the fountain of Chriſt's blood, and flow freely. They coſt us nothing. They are the free gifts of our loving Saviour, which of his abundant mercy he beſtows upon his people; and this makes his blood very precious to them, that the gifts, which are ineſtimable, they receive from it freely; and by their repeated trials of its worth and value, they grow in the knowledge and love of its preciouſneſs: for they find it not only neceſſary for their ſins,

but

but alſo for their duties. The holieſt duty, which was ever done by a mere man, wanted waſhing in this fountain. The ceremonial law taught this doctrine in a very clear manner: For upon the holy crown of the high prieſt there was a plate of pure gold, with this inſcription, Holineſs to the Lord, "And it ſhall be upon Aaron's "forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of "the holy things which the children of Iſrael "ſhall hallow in all their holy gifts, and it ſhall "be always upon his forehead, that they may "be accepted before the Lord." Exod. xxviii. 38. Herein he repreſented the office of the high prieſt of our profeſſion, who bears the iniquity of our holy things: for there is imperfection in every duty, in every act of obedience ſome ſhort coming, which requires the atoning blood of Chriſt, that it may be accepted before the Lord. There is no believer, who loves God in that perfect manner, which the ſpirituality of the law requires. This appears very evidently from their failings in the ſervices which they pay him. When do they pray without ſome wandering thoughts? When do they hear the word as in the preſence of God, and receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God? Do they not ſometimes hear with great dulneſs, and at other times are not able to mix faith with what they hear? Are they not negligent in ſearching the ſcriptures, and negligent in

praying

praying for a bleſſing, when they do ſearch them? How little do they treaſure up in their memories, and how little fruit does the engrafted word bring forth in their lives? When they go to the Lord's table, how often do they complain of their want of devotion and gratitude? And therefore their ſervices, yea, the very beſt of them, becauſe of theſe imperfections and ſhort comings, would not be acceptable, unleſs they were waſhed in the fountain of Chriſt's blood. Senſible of this they live by faith upon freſh applications of it, ſuing for its merit, and hoping for its efficacy in every thing they do. And as the acceptance of their duties, ſo their comforts are derived from the blood of Chriſt. Their love, their peace, their joy flow from this fountain. This is their continual matter of rejoicing, that the blood of Chriſt was freely ſhed for them, and that he, who gave his blood for them, will with it give them all things. This bears them up under trials, ſtrengthens them againſt temptations, ſupports them in ſickneſs, and arms them againſt death. They know that all theſe things are working together under God for their good. Yea, they experience it, and that makes them happy; happy in time, and happy in eternity. What is now their crown of rejoicing below, will be much more ſo above. Then their joy will be full, when they ſhall join that innumerable company, whom no man can number, and with them

give

give honour and glory, and bleſſing and praiſe to him that was ſlain, and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hath made them kings and prieſts unto God and his Father. Then they will know how to value that blood which brought them to ſuch perfect and eternal bleſſedneſs. O Lord, help us to ſet a greater value upon it than we commonly do. Teach us more of our want of it, and of its worth. Supply us more abundantly with the graces and bleſſings purchaſed by its merit, and freely beſtowed by its efficacy. And may the dear Lamb of God give his bleſſing to what has been now ſpoken, although it has been in much weakneſs, that if it be his holy will, all who hear me this day may be brought to ſee and to lament their ſpiritual uncleanneſs, and to apply for cleanſing to the blood of Jeſus. Oh! that the Lord God would direct you all to the fountain, which he has opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, and may he give you faith to waſh in it and to be cleanſed from all ſin, according to what we have been aſking this day in the excellent words of our church.

" Grant, we beſeech thee, merciful Lord, to
" thy faithful people, pardon and peace; that
" they may be cleanſed from all their ſins, and
" ſerve thee with a quiet mind, through Jeſus
" Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*"

THE

BALM OF GILEAD.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE

BALM OF GILEAD.

DISCOURSE XI.

JER. viii. 22.

Is there no balm in Gilead *? Is there no phyſician there ? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered ?*

ALL men love health. The deſire of it is founded in nature. It is one of the natural inſtincts which never leaves us. So long as we love pleaſure and hate pain, we cannot but love health, as the chief of all outward bleſſings. Indeed it is to be deſired beyond them all, becauſe without it we can enjoy none of them, without it we are unfit for our worldly buſineſs and employment, and unfit for the duties of religion. A good man would therefore wiſh for health with a view to the concerns of a better life, as well as to thoſe of the preſent life. All men deſire it upon a temporal account. But alas!

alas! how few have any real deſire for the health of the ſoul? If the body be in great pain, with what haſte do they ſend for relief, and how carefully do they follow the phyſicians' preſcription? But when their ſouls are wounded with ſin, and they may endure the ſmart and anguiſh of their wounds for ever: for theſe are by any human means incurable, and when a divine remedy is propoſed, and they hear of a loving and an almighty phyſician, under whoſe hands no patient was ever loſt, yet they have not one wiſh to be healed. What can be the reaſon of this? Why are the very men, who with an invariable affection love bodily health, ſo far from deſiring the health of the ſoul, that when they have an offer of being healed of all their ſpiritual maladies, they neglect the remedy, and deſpiſe the phyſician? Is not this unaccountable conduct? What can make the ſame men in the ſame caſe reaſon ſo differently? If they had an infallible remedy for the recovery of bodily health, there is not one of them who would reject it; but there is a ſovereign remedy for the recovery of the health of the ſoul, there is balm in Gilead, and a moſt kind and able phyſician there to apply it, and yet ſpiritual maladies abound. Let us enquire into the cauſe of this inconſiſtent behaviour. It is an enquiry in which we are all nearly concerned. Our welfare depends on our being healed of the wounds of ſin, by this balm of Gilead. We

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can have no true peace of conſcience here, nor no true happineſs hereafter, unleſs we take this ſovereign medicine. May the Lord God diſpoſe us all to take it by means of what ſhall be ſaid in opening and explaining the text, in which there is,

Firſt, Some ſickneſs referred to.

Secondly, A ſovereign medicine—there is balm in Gilead to heal it.

Thirdly, A great phyſician to apply it; and all the means of healing being thus ready at hand, the queſtion naturally follows, in the

Fourth place, Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

If we look back to the 17th verſe we ſhall find an account of the ſickneſs referred to in the text. The people were ſtung with ſerpents and cockatrices, and of the moſt venomous and fiery ſort, whoſe poiſon, once infuſed into the blood, acts like the moſt raging fire, conſuming and drying up the fluids of the body, and in a ſhort time bringing on certain death. "For behold I "will ſend ſerpents, cockatrices, among you, "which will not be charmed, and they ſhall "bite you, ſaith the Lord." This is a juſt picture of that more deadly poiſon, which the old ſerpent the devil infuſed into both body and ſoul, the effects of which all the human race have felt: for he drew us all into ſin, and the dreadful conſequences of ſin appear in that variety of

diſeaſes which bring down our bodies to the grave of death, and in that variety of corrupt and depraved appetites, which proves the ſoul to be alienated from the life of God, and to be incapable, unleſs it be entirely changed, of enjoying God. It was ſin which thus poiſoned our nature: for before ſin entered into the world, all things were good. There was no evil to afflict either body or ſoul. But when ſin entered, then the ſanction of the law took place, "In the day that thou eateſt of the forbidden "fruit, dying thou ſhalt die." Gen. ii. 17. In that day thy body ſhall become mortal, and liable to thoſe pains and diſeaſes, which in a courſe of years ſhall deſtroy its animal life, and thy ſoul ſhall be ſeparated from the fountain of its ſpiritual life, and cut off from all communion with God in this world, and in the next it ſhall be ſeparated from him for ever, which is the ſecond death. Oh ſin! what haſt thou done! Thou art the author of all the evils which mankind are capable of ſuffering in earth and hell. Thou broughteſt them all upon us, thou enemy of God and man. And wilt thou afterwards pretend to be our friend? Wilt thou come to court us with promiſes of happineſs, that by deceiving us, thou mayeſt more effectually poiſon and deſtroy our bodies and ſouls? Look upon this baſe traitor, my brethren. Can he be a friend to your nature, who has ſubjected it to all the miſeries of mortality?

tality? If you have any true love for yourſelves, how can you love and cheriſh ſin, which has made you liable to ſuffer the firſt and the ſecond death? What! is this a friend to be taken into your boſom, one that will murder your body, and bring both body and ſoul into hell? Accuſtom yourſelves to view ſin in this light, and it will help you to ſee the horrible deſtructive nature of it. When you behold a dead corpſe, think what a murderer ſin is: for that body would never have died, if ſin had not poiſoned it. And then turn your eyes inwards, and let each man ſay to himſelf—This beloved body of mine, upon which I ſpend ſo much time and care, was made mortal by ſin, and all the pains and diſeaſes, which I can ſuffer, came from the ſame curſed cauſe: yea, from it came all the miſeries which I deſerve to ſuffer with devils and condemned ſpirits in the fire that never is to be quenched, and ſhall I love and delight to ſerve ſuch an enemy? Shall I give up the members of my body as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, and ſo work out mine own everlaſting deſtruction? God forbid. As ſin is the author of all the evil, which I do or can endure, I will therefore fight againſt it, and may the Lord God ſave me from the guilt, and deliver me from the dominion of it.

This is the language of every heart, which is made ſenſible of the poiſonous qualities of ſin. When the awakened ſinner feels the malignant

venom working in his conſtitution, he will be led to abhor and to deteſt it, and the more ſo, when the ſcripture diſcovers to him the execrable foe, who poiſoned him with ſin, and that was the old ſerpent. What theſe ſerpents are ſaid in the 17th verſe to have done to the body in poiſoning it, the ſame did he both to body and ſoul; and as he did it at firſt in the ſerpent, he has therefore been known and diſtinguiſhed by this name from the time that he deceived our firſt parents in the ſubtle ſerpent. The apoſtle has given us a very alarming deſcription of him, Rev. xii. 9. where he is treating of the war which was in heaven between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels. "And "the great dragon, he ſays, was caſt out, the "old ſerpent, called the devil and ſatan, who "deceiveth the whole world." Here he is called the ſerpent, alluding to his crafty wilineſs, and the old ſerpent, to denote his having employed all his wiles to deceive and ruin mankind. As ſoon as they were created, he plotted their deſtruction, and he became ſatan, their ſworn adverſary, and the devil, their accuſer, who ſought to deſtroy their precious lives with the rage of a dragon; yea, with more rage than common dragons have, even with the burning fury of the great dragon. And alas! he was ſucceſsful: for he deceiveth the whole world. He poiſoned the whole human race. He corrupted all fleſh,

and we are now groaning under the dreadful effects of our total corruption. The curſed venom of ſin, which he infuſed into our bodies, ſtill works in them; but its more curſed venom ſtill works, though leſs perceptibly, in our ſouls. The poiſon keeps working in the body, until it bring on ſickneſs and death, and reduce us to the duſt, from whence we were taken; and it keeps working in the ſoul in every hateful and unholy temper, which tends to ſtir up the wrath and indignation of God, and to ſeparate the ſoul for ever and ever from him the fountain of life and glory.

This is the great and univerſal malady referred to in the text, the malady of ſin, with which the old ſerpent, the devil, has poiſoned the whole world. When he deceived our firſt parents, he then poiſoned the fountain, and all the ſtreams which have been ever ſince flowing from it partake of the direful infection: for the word of truth declares, "That as by one man ſin entered "into the world, and death by ſin, ſo death "paſſed upon all men, in whom all have ſinned." Here the entrance of ſin is ſaid to be the cauſe of the entrance of death, and we all die in Adam, therefore we all ſinned in him: for the wages of ſin is death. Now God being infinitely juſt and righteous, would not pay the wages, unleſs there were ſome ſin to deſerve them, but infants receive the wages of ſin, and conſequently they

they are ſinners; they die in Adam, becauſe in him they ſinned. "For by the offence of one, "judgment came upon all men to condemna- "tion." Thus was our whole nature, both body and ſoul, corrupted by the fall, and there is not a ſound part or faculty in either of them. They are corrupt and abominable altogether, and in nothing does this total corruption more evidently diſcover itſelf, than in their entire blindneſs and inſenſibility of their dangerous condition. They are poiſoned, and yet they know it not; nay, they are ſo unwilling to know it, that when we inform them of it, they are highly offended. They cannot bear to be told of it, no, not by the miniſters of the goſpel, whoſe office and duty it is. We are ſure to ſtir up their rage and hatred, if we diſcover to them the workings of this poiſon in their hearts, and if we appeal to the effects of it in their lives, and refer them to the plentiful ſtreams of iniquity, which are continually flowing from the corrupt fountain of the heart, then they cannot bear us; they are like the deaf adder, that ſtoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming ever ſo wiſely. They are reſolved not to be diſturbed about their ſins, and therefore they will not hear of their ſickneſs or of their danger. They had rather die of their malady, than be made uneaſy about it. Let ſin do its worſt in the next life, in the preſent they will

will enjoy it; and in ſweet ſecurity too, if they can. Is not this an aſtoniſhing degree of infatuation? Is it not one of the ſtrongeſt deluſions of the devil, that he ſhould make thoſe very men inſenſible of their ſpiritual maladies, who are exquiſitely ſenſible of the leaſt bodily malady, whoſe fears are all alarmed at the thoughts of their dying to this world, but who have not the leaſt concern about their dying from God and glory? Are any of you, my brethren, in this caſe? Are you eaſy about the ſtate of your ſouls, having never been in any diſtreſs about original and actual ſin? Did you never feel yourſelves ſo ſick of both, that you were afraid you ſhould periſh everlaſtingly? If not, conſider what it is, which keeps you in this fatal ſecurity. Are not you ſinners? For all have ſinned. And has not ſin poiſoned both body and ſoul? And is not this one of the ſad, ſtupifying effects of its poiſon, that while there is but a ſtep between you and death, yet you have no concern about your being healed? Are theſe things ſo? If they be, may the almighty God awaken you to a ſenſe of your danger. Oh! that he may ſet home and fix ſuch a conviction of ſin upon your conſciences, that, feeling your malady, you may earneſtly ſeek the great phyſician's help, and may happily find that there is balm in Gilead; which is the

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Second particular I was to conſider. Glory be to God, who hath not left us without remedy. Our diſeaſe is dangerous, but there is balm in Gilead, which can heal perfectly and eternally. The country of Gilead was famous for a precious balm which grew there. "Go up to Gilead, "and take balm," ſays the prophet Jeremiah, xlvi. 11. Its healing virtue is deſcribed by him, chap. li. 8. where ſpeaking of the downfal of Babylon, he ſays, "Take balm for her pain, if "ſo be ſhe may be healed." This ſovereign medicine, which then grew in Gilead, could aſſuage the pain of wounds and heal them, and thereby was a type of the gracious remedy, which God had provided for the healing of the wounds of ſin; namely, the moſt precious blood of the Lamb of God, applied and made effectual by the holy Spirit: for as this cleanſes away all the pollutions, ſo it heals all the diſeaſes of ſin. The ſcripture has treated largely of its healing virtue, but it is no where more forcibly recommended than in the parable of the good Samaritan. Our Lord ſays, "A certain man went "down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell "among thieves, who ſtripped him of his rai-"ment, and wounded him, and departed, leav-"ing him half-dead." This certain man was Adam, whoſe poſſeſſion was in a paradiſe of peace and reſt, and there he was innocent, ſafe and happy: But he left this bliſsful ſtate of his

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own accord, contrary to God's expreſs commandment, and he fell among thieves, ſatan and his angels, who drew him into ſin, and ſtripped him of his raiment, robbed him of his righteouſneſs, in which his ſoul had hitherto appeared in immaculate purity before God. This ſpotleſs robe they took away, and left poor fallen man naked and wounded. They wounded his body with thoſe pains and diſeaſes, which bring it down to the duſt, from whence it was taken; and they wounded his ſoul in all its faculties, his underſtanding with darkneſs, his will with a vicious choice, and his affections with worldly-mindedneſs, ſo that he placed his love upon the creature inſtead of the Creator; they wounded his conſcience with guilt, and with fear of death and of hell. "And they departed, leav-"ing him half dead:" for his ſoul, the better part, was ſeparated from God, and already dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and the body was dying. When man was fallen into this helpleſs ſtate, the patriarchal diſpenſation took place from Adam to Moſes, under which the firſt-born was prieſt, and had a right to offer up the appointed ſacrifices; but theſe could not give life to the ſinner, and therefore the prieſt came and looked upon him, and paſſed by on the one ſide, being unable to raiſe him up from the death of ſin. Next ſucceeded the levitical diſpenſation from Moſes to Chriſt: The Levite came and looked upon him,

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and paſſed by on the other ſide, being unable, by any of the legal rites and ceremonies, to raiſe fallen man to his former righteouſneſs and perfection. "But a certain Samaritan, as he jour-" neyed, came where he was." Samaritan ſignifies a keeper, and it here ſtands for the keeper of Iſrael, whoſe compaſſions fail not: "for " when he ſaw him, he had compaſſion on " him." His love diſpoſed him to uſe his power for the ſinner's recovery. He was almighty, and he reſolved to uſe his almighty power to heal him. He went up to him, and applied the balm of Gilead—" he bound up his wounds, " pouring in oil and wine," wine, the eſtabliſhed type of the moſt precious blood of the lamb of God; and oil, the known emblem of the ſalutary influence of the holy Spirit: Pour theſe into the deepeſt and moſt dangerous wounds of ſin, and they will infallibly work a perfect cure: for the blood has a divine virtue to heal, being appointed and ordained of God for that very purpoſe. It cleanſeth us, ſays one who had experienced its virtue, and by cleanſing healeth us from all ſin. And no wonder: becauſe it is the blood of God. He, who ſhed it, was God and man united in one Chriſt, and therefore it had infinite and divine merit. And when he ſtood in the place of ſinners, obeyed and ſuffered for them, and was obedient even unto death, his obedience and ſufferings could

want nothing to render them as ſatisfactory as the law and juſtice of the Father could require: becauſe his blood had virtue as a releaſe to diſcharge believers from all the pains and penalties, to which they were ſubjected for their ſins, and as a purchaſe to put them in poſſeſſion of their forfeited eſtate. The Apoſtle deſcribes its operating, as a releaſe, when he ſays of it, "that "we have redemption through his blood, even "the forgiveneſs of ſins," and as a purchaſe, when he ſays, "that Chriſt, having waſhed "us from our ſins in his own blood, hath "made us kings and prieſts unto God and his "Father."

Now ſince the blood of Chriſt has this ſovereign healing virtue, and ſince we have through it redemption, even eternal redemption from all the pains and miſeries of ſin, ſurely then, it is an eſſential ingredient in that precious balm of Gilead, which has virtue to heal every ſinner who takes it, let his caſe be ever ſo dangerous? But then it muſt be taken. A ſick man may have a very good remedy at hand; but if he never take it, it can never cure him. In like manner, it is not enough that the blood of Chriſt can heal, but in order to heal, it muſt be applied. The application makes it effectual, and therefore we read of the blood of ſprinkling both in the Old Teſtament, and in the New. The blood muſt be ſprinkled upon the conſcience

ence in order to heal the wounds of ſin, and this is the office of the holy Spirit. He applies the blood of Chriſt: He brings this healing balm to the wounded ſoul. And as oil was the emblem of his ſalutary influence, therefore in the good Samaritan's preſcription we find the medicine was made up of oil and wine, of the blood of Chriſt, and of the grace of his Spirit, which two, ſweetly joined and tempered together, make up the healing balm of Gilead. There is not a wound of ſin ſo deep, a diſeaſe of ſin ſo deſperate, but the blood of Chriſt, applied by the holy Spirit, can heal them: for God hereby healeth the broken in heart, and giveth this medicine to heal their ſickneſs. Although they be half dead, yet it can recover them; becauſe it operates by a divine and almighty power. The blood of Chriſt can raiſe the deadeſt ſoul to juſtification of life, and through ſanctification of the Spirit this life is renewed and ſtrengthened day by day, untill every ſpiritual malady of ſin be removed, and ſorrow and ſighing be done away for ever. Hear this, ye mourners in Sion, and lift up your drooping heads. Looking into yourſelves you may have reaſon to grieve. Your ſins are many and great. They have wounded your conſciences. You feel the ſmart, and your diſtreſs is exquiſite. But deſpair not. Lo, there is balm in Gilead. The blood of Jeſus is an infallible remedy. The holy Spirit is almighty to apply it,

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and he has already ſhewed you your want of it. Oh! that he may give you grace to wait until he ſupply your wants, and you feel its ſovereign virtue healing your wounded conſciences. And to encourage you to ſeek and wait until you find, remember that there is not only balm in Gilead, but alſo that there is a phyſician there; as I am, in the

Third place to conſider, under whoſe hands you cannot fail of a perfect recovery; and he is no leſs a perſon than the great phyſician of ſouls, who is alſo God over all, bleſſed for ever. He who created all things, viſible and inviſible, and who ſupports them by the word of his power, vouchſafes to heal his people of their ſins; ſo there can be no doubt of his power, becauſe he is almighty to heal. And can there be any doubt of his love? Did not his love bring him down from heaven to the loweſt humiliation, even to veil his divine glory under a covering of fleſh, and did not his love then lead him to put forth his divine power to heal every one who applied to him for a bodily cure? Whereby he demonſtrated to us his readineſs to exert the ſame power to heal the ſpiritual infirmities of thoſe who come to him for his aſſiſtance. The eternal God, whom angels and arch-angels worſhip and adore, was pleaſed to be manifeſted in the fleſh, ſo that God and man were one Chriſt, and the one Chriſt, the God-man, ſtood up in the

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place of ſinners, as their repreſentative; for them he obeyed the law, and ſuffered the pains and penalties due to the breach of it, that by his ſtripes they might be healed: He was obedient, even unto death, and then riſing from the dead, as their repreſentative, he wrought out an all-perfect righteouſneſs for them, which being imputed unto them by faith, they thereby received juſtification to life, and all the deadly wounds of ſin are healed. Thus the great phyſician of ſouls has demonſtrated his love. You may read it in every action of his life, and in every ſuffering unto death. You may read it engraven in every wound of his crucified body. What were the marks and ſcars which the crown of thorns made in his head, and the whips and ſcourges made on his back, but viſible ſigns and ſeals of his love? The love which lead him to his agony and bloody ſweat, to his bitter croſs and paſſion, was greater than that of the ſtrongeſt inſtinct and natural affection in the human breaſt: "For "can a woman forget her ſucking child, that "ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion upon the ſon "of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet "will not I forget thee, ſaith the Lord: for I "have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." While he looks upon them, he cannot forget his people: becauſe on the palms of his hands are the prints of the nails by which he was faſtened to the croſs, and theſe prints are the precious

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engravings of his wonderful love. Look upon the crucified Jeſus, my chriſtian brethren, as wounded for your tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for your iniquities, and ſee if ever there was love like his. Every wound ſpeaks forth his love, every bruiſe loudly proclaims the greatneſs of it. His death demonſtrates his love to have been ſtronger than death, and his pierced ſide ſhewed that he had ſet his people as a ſeal upon his heart; for from thence there flowed blood and water, water to cleanſe the pollution, and blood to heal the wounds of their ſins. Surely then, he who ſhed his heart's blood for them cannot want love? Let this encourage poor dejected ſouls to wait upon him. Why are ye ſo troubled, as if God had not provided a medicine to heal the broken-hearted? Is there not balm in Gilead? Is there not a phyſician there? Oh! wait upon him then for his kind aſſiſtance, and you will certainly find that the fountain of his love is not dried up. He is now indeed on the throne of glory, king of kings, and lord of lords, but he has the ſame tender heart, which once bled to death upon the croſs. Apply to him for relief, and he will not caſt you out. You can have no diſtemper, but what he has power to heal: for he is an almighty phyſician. And no diſtemper but what he has love to heal; for God is love, and the Saviour the Lord Chriſt is God. How great ſoever the wounds of ſin may be, yet if

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you fall low at his foot-ſtool, crying for mercy, he will not reject your ſuit. What! was it ever known that he caſt out the prayer of the poor deſtitute? No. There never was, and there never will be ſuch an inſtance. When he was upon earth he never refuſed to heal any one who aſked his help. He never ſent one ſingle perſon away unrelieved, whatever his diſeaſe might be, or however unworthy he was to be healed of it. He cured all that came to him, and he did not half cure them, but it is written, "they were made perfectly whole." Perfectly does he heal all the wounds of ſin, and eternally. He heals for ever. His medicines reſtore his patients to everlaſting health. He forgiveth all their ſins, and healeth all their infirmities, and thus admits them into the city of the living God, the inhabitant of which ſhall not ſay, I am ſick; for the people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquity, and ſo freely and fully forgiven, that God will remember it no more. And is this indeed the character of the great phyſician of ſouls? Is his heart ſo full of love, that he is always diſpoſed to uſe his power for the perfect recovery of convinced and afflicted ſinners? Is he as willing as he is able to heal them? No doubt he is. Let ſuch perſons then ſeek his help, and look up unto him for medicine to heal their wounded conſciences. He hath wounded you out of love, and he will heal.

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He hath convinced you of your wants, in order that you might wait upon him to have them ſupplied. Wait then, and he will give you abundant reaſon to admire and to praiſe the wonders, which he will do for you and for your ſalvation. He will pardon you freely, and will heal all the wounds which ſin has made, and then he will enable you to declare upon your own happy experience, that there is balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there.

Now ſince this is the caſe, why do men labour under the maladies of ſin? Since the blood of Chriſt is the ſovereign balm, and Chriſt is the phyſician, whoſe power and love are able and willing to heal the moſt deſperate diſeaſe, and the holy Spirit is almighty to apply the healing balm, may we not then reaſonably enquire, Why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? And this is the

Fourth and laſt particular to be conſidered: Why are any men ſick, when they have an offer of health? Do they chooſe, do they love ſickneſs? Yes. The ſame men, whoſe every pulſe beats after bodily health, chooſe and love ſpiritual ſickneſs. They are alarmed at the leaſt diſorder which attacks the body, and yet they have no concern about the ſoul, although it be wounded with ſin, and ſick unto death, yea juſt ready to periſh. How abſurd is this conduct? Thus to prefer the health of the meaner and

baſer part of their conſtitution to the more noble and exalted part, is a flagrant abſurdity. Nay, not to deſire the health of the ſoul, when it is offered them, is acting unnaturally againſt their own intereſt. To reject it, when the great phyſician himſelf offers it in his word, is treating him with vile ingratitude; and not to receive this ineſtimable remedy at his hands, when he ſends out his miniſters to invite ſinners to take it, to ſpurn it from them, as if it was a thing which they did not value, or did not want, this is the height of ſin and wickedneſs; for whoſoever thus accounteth the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and thereby doth deſpiſe unto the ſpirit of grace, for him there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.

This being the caſe, the queſtion returns, What can be the reaſon, that the health of the daughter of my people is not recovered. Here is the all-healing balm of Gilead, here is an all-wiſe, and an almighty phyſician, and why then, my brethren, will you not for his ſake, for your own ſakes, receive the ſovereign medicine at his hands? What other cauſe can be aſſigned, but that you love your diſeaſe more than health. Sin, with all its infirmities, is dearer to you than the full enjoyment of the pleaſures of a perfect recovery. Sin, although you die of it, is more

precious,

precious, than to receive life from the hands of our redeeming God. Sin, although it ſends you to hell, is more deſirable than health in heaven. Sin, although it bring on you never-ending torments with devils and condemned ſpirits, is ſweeter to you than theſe eternal joys which are at God's right hand for evermore. Oh! what a wonderful deluſion is there in ſin, that it ſhould thus make men love it more than health and happineſs? How ſtrong is the deluſion, ſince the ſame men reaſon in the things belonging to the body, directly contrary to what they do in things belonging to the ſoul! Propoſe immediate relief to any of them lying in a ſevere fit of the gout or ſtone, they embrace the propoſal with eager joy. Propoſe immediate relief from the pains and miſeries of ſin, they will not hear of, much leſs take the remedy. There is balm in Gilead, a phyſician is there, even the Lord Jeſus, the ſovereign phyſician of ſouls, and yet they will not apply to him. Sick as they are, and ready to expire with the infirmities of ſin, yet they had rather periſh than be beholden to him for a cure. All his attributes, his power, his wiſdom, his goodneſs, cannot win them. All his graces, his pardoning, juſtifying, ſanctifying grace, have no influence. He may be a God almighty to ſave, but the charms of ſin, though but for a ſeaſon, ſeem to them preferable to

the bleſſings of his preſent and eternal ſalvation.

But whence is it that ſin ſhould be capable of deluding men ſo far as to make them prefer ſickneſs to health? The true cauſe is this. Sin blinds their eyes, and hardens their hearts. It ſtupifies and deadens the ſenſes, ſo that they feel not their ſpiritual in the ſame manner as they do their bodily diſeaſes. The underſtanding is in darkneſs, they know not that it is diſeaſed. When they know it, the memory is ſhort and ſoon forgets it. When they remember it, yet conſcience is faſt aſleep; it neither checks the will in the choice, nor the affections in the love and enjoyment of ſin. Thus has ſin impaired all their faculties, and they have no deſire to be healed, becauſe they are inſenſible of their malady. When we endeavour to convince them of it, they will not believe us: And becauſe they do not feel the immediate ſmart of their ſins, they will not therefore give credit to us, when we declare, from the word of God, that they will ſmart for them, and to eternity, unleſs they come to the phyſician of ſouls to be healed. And this will be the caſe, ſo long as they are intent upon their preſent purſuits, and live entirely to ſenſe and to its enjoyments. All this time their own hearts deceive them: for it is one of the greateſt deluſions of ſin, to keep men ignorant

rant of the true ſtate of their ſouls. It flatters them with peace, while the Almighty is at war with them; and it promiſes them happineſs in the enjoyment of thoſe things, which will bring on them eternal torments. And while it keeps them in this ſtate of carnal ſecurity, nothing can appear to them more abſurd than to hear that they are ſick, when they fancy themſelves to be in perfect health.

1. My brethren, are any of you in this ſtate? Do you feel no pain, and do you apprehend no danger from your ſins? Are you entirely ſecure, although your ſins be unpardoned, and God might glorify his juſtice by immediately inflicting the deſerved puniſhment? Nay, do you not find part of ſin's puniſhment already inflicted, and why then ſhould you hope to eſcape the remaining part? For have you not ſuffered ſome of thoſe pains and ſickneſſes, which in a courſe of years will infallibly bring down your bodies to the grave, and inflict the ſentence on them, "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou re-"turn." The body was not at firſt liable to this ſentence, until ſin poured its curſed poiſon into it, and infected it with thoſe painful maladies, which no art of phyſic can heal, and which wear it down to the grave of death. Every pain which it feels, every ſickneſs which it labours under, all the outward and inward dangers which threaten its mortal life, are owing to ſin;

for the wages of ſin is death. All the harbingers of death, which afflict and weaken men's bodies, and thereby prepare the way for his ſeizing on them, and carrying them priſoners to the dark and cold regions of the grave, all theſe derive their power over us from ſin; for, as by one man, ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, ſo death paſſed upon all men? for that all have ſinned. Sin has moſt undoubtedly wounded your bodies with pains and ſickneſſes, with mortality and death; and what a madneſs then and infatuation is it to think, that ſin has not wounded your ſouls as well as your bodies? For what ſays the ſcripture? "The ſoul that ſinneth it "ſhall die." Is not that a deſperate wound? "It ſhall die." How! Can the ſoul die? Yes. It may be dead in treſpaſſes and ſin. Its death conſiſts in being ſeparated from God, the fountain of life, and in having no communion with him either in this world or in the next. And is not this a greater puniſhment than the death of the body, and is it not infinitely more painful too, thus to die from God and glory, and to be tormented with the worm that never dieth, and in the fire that never ſhall be quenched? What! is not that a wound indeed which thus alienated you from the life of God? yea, a moſt dreadful wound, the torment and anguiſh of which you may ſuffer for ever and ever? Men and brethren, are theſe things ſo? Examine the evi-

dence

dence and determine. Is not ſin the great murderer, who has wounded your bodies with pains and diſeaſes, and mortality, and has ſeparated your ſouls from God, the fountain of life, and made you ſubject to the firſt and ſecond death? Is not the proof of theſe truths as complete and full as the caſe will admit of? Does it not amount even to a demonſtration? And do you not then ſtand in need of ſome ſovereign balm to heal you, and do you not want a phyſician? You certainly do, as much as ever dying men did. And why then do you neglect the remedy, and ſlight the phyſician?

But perhaps ſome perſons may ſay, How can theſe things be? Am not I in perfect health, and how then can I labour under thoſe diſeaſes which you are mentioning? Yes, my brother, you may be in health, your body may be perfectly well, but you have a miſerable, ſinful ſoul within you, which is infected with the plague and foul leproſy of original ſin, and which has been wounded with thouſands of actual crimes. This is your caſe, and it is moſt deplorable. All the powers in nature can give you no relief. There is no remedy in heaven or earth, but the blood of Jeſus Chriſt applied by the grace of his good Spirit, and yet ſin has ſuch power over you as to perſuade you to neglect that precious medicine, without which you muſt periſh everlaſtingly.

What

What! ſay you, Can I be in this deſperate condition, and not know and feel it? Yes, you may. It is an undoubted matter of fact, that ſin brought as many diſeaſes upon the ſoul, as it did upon the body. Indeed, it left the ſoul entirely ſick, and without any ſoundneſs in it, as we daily confeſs in the words of our church, "there "is no health in us." And if there be no health in you, ſurely then you are ſick in every part? And you have no ſenſe of your malady, becauſe ſin has ſo impaired all your faculties, that you have no ſpiritual diſcernment. You do not diſcern your caſe to be dangerous, which is one of the worſt ſymptoms you could have. It proves you to be far gone in a ſpiritual lethargy, ſo that the leſs ſenſe you have, the greater is your danger. And is not this a dangerous diſeaſe which makes the patient inſenſible? For how can he avoid periſhing of it, while conſcience, which ought to give the alarm, is ſeared with a hot iron, and the other faculties of the ſoul are paſt feeling? This is the ſcripture account of your condition, and if it has not convinced you, may the Lord God Almighty make you ſenſible of your malady, that you may apply to the great phyſician of ſouls for the balm of Gilead along with thoſe convinced ſinners, who are now waiting upon him for the ſovereign remedy.

2. When ſinners are firſt brought to a ſenſe of their guilt and of their danger, and conſcience begins

begins to do its duty, they are apt to write bitter things againſt themſelves, and through unbelief to reject the offered mercies of the goſpel. They feel the wounds of ſin more ſharp and painful, than ever its pleaſures had been ſweet and delightful. The law ſtirs up guilt, terrifies their conſciences with its threatenings, ſets God before their eyes as armed with almighty juſtice to inflict the threatened puniſhment, and they ſee no way open to eſcape. Speak to perſons in this diſtreſs of the balm of Gilead, the remedy appointed of God for their diſeaſe, they cannot believe it as able to heal them, or if they are brought to believe this, yet they reject the comforts of the bleſſed medicine, for want of faith to apply it to themſelves.

Let us conſider this caſe a little. My brethren, ſin has wounded your bodies and ſouls, and you are become ſenſible of the malady. You feel the anguiſh of it, and you deſire to be healed. What objection have you to the remedy which the Lord God had appointed for your recovery? Has it not virtue to heal your wounded conſciences? You know what the remedy is: It is the balm of Gilead, the moſt precious blood of the lamb of God, applied by the eternal Spirit, and it heals not by any natural or phyſical qualities, but by a divine and ſpiritual efficacy. The power of God is always preſent with it to heal. You cannot therefore object

ject againſt the medicine; becauſe God has provided it, and he, with his own arm, renders it effectual for the cure of wounded conſciences.

True, ſay you, I believe the remedy is infallible, but how do I know that God will apply it to my ſoul? You are wounded, and it is balm for wounded conſciences, therefore for yours. God has awakened you, he has brought you to the knowledge of your diſeaſe, and you feel the pain of it. For what reaſon has God done this? but that the ſenſe of your miſery might ſend you to the phyſician for his advice and aſſiſtance. When the enemy of ſouls ſees you thus eſcaping out of his hands, he would try to perſuade you, that the remedy is not for you; whereas you are the very perſons to whom the goſpel offers it. Chriſt ſays, he came not to call the righteous, but ſinners, to repentance; and you are ſinners, you feel the miſery of ſin, and therefore Chriſt came to call you. Since you are ſick, he calls you as much as if he had called you by name in the goſpel, to receive of him the balm of Gilead to heal all your ſpiritual infirmities.

You think you ſhould be happy, if you could believe this, but you find ſo many and ſuch deſperate wounds, ſo many ſoul-murdering ſins, that you dare not believe the remedy is for ſuch as you. But why not? Is not the medicine for ſin-ſick ſouls? And the more ſick you are, the more you want the medicine, and be your caſe

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the worſt that ever was, yet the virtue of the medicine is almighty. If from the ſole of the foot, even to the crown of the head, there was no ſoundneſs in you, but in every part wounds and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores, yet the balm of Gilead can make a perfect cure; yea, if you have ten thouſand more wounds than you have, it could heal them all. Conſider then how greatly you diſparage and vilify the love and power of our divine phyſician, by ſuppoſing your ſins more able to kill than he is to heal. Is not he the Lord God Almighty, and are not all things poſſible with him? Oh! be not faithleſs then, but believing.

But perhaps guilt ſuggeſts to you, My caſe is ſingular, I have ſinned againſt light and conviction; often did I reſolve to leave my ſins, but I as often broke my reſolutions, and therefore I fear that I have ſinned away my day of grace, and that there is no mercy for me. Your caſe is bad, but not deſperate. Looking back on your paſt life, you ſhould be humbled, but not deſpair; for are you not convinced of your want of the balm of Gilead, and does not it, by a divine virtue, heal all manner of ſins? Sins againſt light, againſt many ſolemn reſolutions, and againſt many warnings of conſcience, as well as other ſins? The medicine certainly can heal them all; becauſe it is appointed of God for that purpoſe, and by his almighty power he renders it

it effectual, and therefore whatever keeps you from relying upon its power to heal you, is an enemy to your ſoul. Oh! pray againſt unbelief, for that is at the bottom of all your objections againſt this ſovereign medicine, and may the Lord give you faith to be healed.

What! can it heal me, ſays ſome poor dejected broken-hearted ſinner, who ſees nothing but ſin in his heart and life? Yes, it is appointed for you by name. "He healeth the bro-"ken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Pſalm cxlvii. 3. The great phyſician has an eſpecial regard for your caſe. He ſays, he was ſent to heal the broken-hearted. But not ſuch as I am, ſays one, my heart is worſe than broken, it is dead to God, and to the things of God. Be it ſo. Our phyſician is famous for raiſing the dead. It is his office and his glory. In the parable of the good Samaritan, he healed the man who was half dead. His ſoul was as dead to God as yours is. But the precious balm, which was applied to him, made him alive to God. The ſame remedy can quicken you, although you have been dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; and as you are ſo far quickened as to ſee your want of this remedy, may you ſoon experience its ſovereign virtue, and receive from it ſaving health.

After many doubts and fears have been ſilenced, new ones ſtill ariſe. Unbelief may perhaps have

have been ſuggeſting to ſome of your hearts; the medicine certainly can heal all caſes, but I have nothing to recommend me to the phyſician. Have you nothing? Then this is your beſt recommendation. He always relieves poor diſtreſſed dying objects, who have nothing to bring him, but their ſins and their miſeries. He is therefore a phyſician, that he may relieve ſuch; for by healing thoſe, whom none elſe can heal, he gets all the glory; and by healing them freely, he exalts his ſovereign grace. Thus he acted in the parable of the good Samaritan. What had the wounded traveller to recommend him? was it not, that he was miſerable and helpleſs? This moved the Lord's compaſſion, and he ſhewed him mercy. "Go, and do thou likewiſe." Apply to the great phyſician, becauſe thou art ſick, and canſt not heal thyſelf, and then he will exalt his rich grace and love, by freely forgiving thee all thy ſins, and by pouring the balm of Gilead into thy wounded conſcience to heal all thine infirmities.

When this objection, which ariſes from pride and unbelief, is removed, and we would perſuade the convinced ſinner to rely upon the promiſes of health and ſalvation, which God has made in his word, he has ſtill difficulties to get over. He is afraid it would be preſumption in him to rely upon the promiſes, and to take comfort from believing, that he ſhall have his ſhare

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and intereſt in them. Whereas he is the very perſon to whom the promiſes are made. His particular caſe is deſcribed in Luke iv. 18. Our Saviour ſays, The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed and commiſſioned me with full powers to relieve every diſtreſſed object, that ſhall apply to me for help. Are you a poor afflicted ſinner? He has good news for you: He was ordained to preach the goſpel to the poor. Have you a broken contrite heart? He is ſent to heal the broken-hearted. Are you in bondage to ſin and ſatan? He is ſent to preach and to give deliverance to the captives. Is your underſtanding blind and ignorant of ſpiritual things? He is ſent to preach, and to give recovering of ſight to the blind. Are you faſt bound with the chains of ſin, and has the iron entered into your ſoul? He is ſent to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed. Here is your character: you are poor broken-hearted captives, blind and miſerable. Here is your promiſe; Chriſt is appointed of God, and has a divine commiſſion to ſupply all your wants. Is it preſumption then in you to apply this promiſe to yourſelves? What! after God has graciouſly made it for the comfort of your afflicted conſciences will you ſay, It would be preſumption in us to take comfort from it? My brethren, the promiſe cannot be broken. By relying upon it, it is yours. Your dependence upon it calls upon

God's faithfulneſs to fulfil it to you. And it is no preſumption, it is a high act of faith, not to ſtagger at the promiſe through unbelief, but to give glory to God, by relying upon it. May he enable you thus to give glory to him, and you ſhall find that his promiſe is like himſelf, unchangeable, and that his word cannot be broken.

Since then there is balm in Gilead for wounded conſciences, provided purpoſely for you, and ſince your objections againſt receiving it are groundleſs, why, my brethren, will you not apply to the almighty phyſician, and now aſk his help? Oh! that this may be the accepted time, and this the day of your ſalvation! Fall down at his feet, implore his aſſiſtance, and his tender heart will melt with compaſſion towards you. If you are diſcouraged in your addreſſes to him, it is becauſe you have not clear ideas of his power and love. He is almighty. He can heal the moſt broken heart, and the moſt wounded conſcience; and his love never failed to influence his power to heal ſuch caſes, when they came before him. Keep not then poring upon your wounds and ſores. By looking too much at them, you cheriſh your doubts and fears. Look unto Jeſus. Remember his advice, "Look "unto me, and be ye ſaved." You ſhould look into yourſelves, to ſee your want of ſalvation,

tion, and look unto him for a ſupply of your wants. And that you may be ſupplied out of his fulneſs, believe his promiſes. Rely upon his faithfulneſs to fulfil them to your ſouls, and thereby you engage his power to give you health and ſalvation.

3. Bleſſed be his holy name, for exerting his divine virtue at this day, and for healing all manner of ſpiritual ſickneſs and all manner of diſeaſe among the people. Great numbers, now alive, are witneſſes for him, that his hand is not ſhortened. Still he ſaves his people from ſin, and from all the maladies brought upon them by ſin. You, my Chriſtian brethren, who have had experience of his divine power and love, ought to ſhew forth his praiſe. It becometh you well to be thankful. Much has been forgiven you, therefore you ſhould love much. The ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael calls upon you by his example to a grateful acknowledgment of the Lord's mercies—" Bleſs the Lord, " O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his " holy name. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and " forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all " thine iniquities, who healeth all thine infir- " mities." Pſalm ciii. 1, 2, 3. After you have received ſuch great benefits, it will be your delight to praiſe him with your lips, and with your lives. The health and ſtrength which he

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has freely given, you will uſe in his ſervice and to his glory, until he take you to himſelf, and give you more happy experience of his great ſalvation, by delivering your ſoul from every infirmity and corruption; and the time will not be long before he will raiſe your bodies from the grave, and make them like his own glorious body. And then he will get himſelf honour indeed, when he ſhall heal both body and ſoul of all the wounds of ſin, and ſhall heal them for ever and ever. That is the glory of our phyſician, he heals to eternity. He makes the ſpirits of juſt men perfect; and they ſtand before the throne of God without any ſpot or ſtain of corruption. And in the morning of the reſurrection, this corruptible body ſhall put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall put on immortality. Thus he beſtows eternal health and ſalvation upon both body and ſoul. Where is there, nay, where can there be ſuch a phyſician? There is none like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders. Still thou art diſplaying the wonders of thy power and love, and adminiſtering thy ſovereign balm for recovering the health of the daughter of thy people. Oh! that thou wouldſt diſplay thy divine virtue among us this day. Ariſe, thou ſun of righteouſneſs, upon all this congregation, with healing under thy beams, and ſave

us from every malady of ſin, from the pollution, from the guilt, and from the power of it, and ſave us from the puniſhment of it with thine eternal ſalvation. Hear us, thou almighty Saviour, and anſwer us to the glory of the Father, and of the holy Spirit, three co-equal and co-eternal perſons in one Jehovah, to whom we give honour and worſhip, and bleſſing and praiſe, now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen.*

UPON THE

PROMISES OF GOD.

DISCOURSE XII.

UPON THE

PROMISES OF GOD.

DISCOURSE XII.

2 PETER i. 4.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes.

WHEN the Lord God firſt publiſhed his law, in Paradiſe, he enforced it with proper ſanctions. He promiſed to our firſt parents the continuance of his favour and immortal life, if they continued to keep the law; but if they ſhould tranſgreſs it, he threatened them with the loſs of his favour, and with the firſt and the ſecond death. Upon their tranſgreſſion, the promiſes became nul and void. All right and title to them was forfeited, and the ſovereign law-giver was bound to inflict the threatened penalties. His truth, his juſtice, his holineſs called upon him to put the ſanctions of the law in force. Accordingly the offenders were arreſted and brought

brought to his bar; and being examined, they confeſſed their crime, but ſtudied to throw part of the blame upon their tempters. The man could make no other defence, but that the woman offered him the temptation; and the woman had no plea to urge, but that the ſerpent beguiled her. Upon this confeſſion they were found guilty; but the Lord God, whoſe mercies are over all his works, was pleaſed to make a diſcovery to them of the covenant of grace. He revealed to them his mind and will concerning the pardon of their tranſgreſſion, and promiſed them a Saviour, who ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and thereby deſtroy his power. The ſerpent's poiſon lies in his head, and when this is bruiſed, he can do no more miſchief. The promiſed ſeed was to undertake this work, and for this purpoſe was the Son of God to be manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil. This firſt promiſe, and all the following promiſes of grace and mercy center in Jeſus Chriſt: for all the promiſes of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God. In him they are Yea; he undertook to ratify and to make them good: and in him they are Amen; they are confirmed and fulfilled to believers. Every promiſe made in Chriſt is an act of God's free grace, and which being made, his perfections bind him to fulfil; for he has engaged, in the promiſe, to give the grace and

bleſſing therein mentioned, to thoſe who believe in Jeſus Chriſt; ſo that the believer's happineſs conſiſts in living by faith upon the promiſes. Faith apprehends and receives Chriſt as held forth in the promiſe, and thereby gets poſſeſſion of the promiſed bleſſing. While faith is kept thus in act and exerciſe, the believer walks ſafely and comfortably: although he has many enemies, and is in the midſt of many dangers, yet he has a promiſe of God's help to ſupport him in every eſtate and circumſtance of life, and to carry him through all trials and troubles. If he rely upon this promiſed help, he cannot be diſappointed; for the promiſe cannot poſſibly fail. All the perfections of God ſtand engaged to ſee it fulfilled, and when faith calls upon God, and relies on him for the fulfilling of it, he cannot deny himſelf, or break the word that is gone out of his mouth. Faith brings down his almighty-power to make a way for the fulfilling of the promiſe, and thus the believer receives a ſupport under all dangers, ſafety againſt all enemies, and a cordial againſt all troubles. This is his happineſs. He ſtaggers not at the promiſe of God through unbelief, but is ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God, and God gives grace to him and makes his faith ſtronger, by which he finds more of the ſweetneſs and riches of the promiſes. My brethren, I wiſh you were all in poſſeſſion of this happineſs, and it is my preſent deſign to direct

direct and to encourage you to ſeek it. The ſcripture which I have choſen for this purpoſe affords us ſome very powerful motives: May the Lord God render our preſent conſideration of them uſeful and profitable to all our ſouls, that we may know clearly,

Firſt, The nature of the promiſes of God.

Secondly, The character of thoſe to whom the promiſes belong; and

Thirdly, Their exceeding greatneſs and preciouſneſs. And while we are conſidering thoſe particulars, may we have the Lord's preſence with us. We have a promiſe of it, "Where-"ever two or three, ſays he, are met together "in my name, there am I in the midſt of them." Oh! that he may be preſent with us at this time. May he ſend the holy Spirit of promiſe into all our hearts to teach us,

Firſt, The nature of the promiſes of God. I define a promiſe to be an act of God's free grace, whereby he has engaged, in his word, to beſtow upon believers all the bleſſings, which come to them through the obedience and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt. The promiſe can ſpring from no other cauſe than from free grace. God had no motive to induce him, but what aroſe from his own abundant and unmerited love, and there was no power to compel him to make any promiſe to fallen man. He had broken the law, and was ſubject to all the pains and penalties

threatened to tranſgreſſion, and if God had left him in this ſtate without any promiſe, he would have dragged on a miſerable life under the terrors of his guilty conſcience, until the executioner came to call him to God's awful bar, and being tried there, and found guilty, how could he eſcape the damnation of hell? To fallen man, thus ſubject to the preſent and eternal puniſhment of ſin, God was pleaſed to make a revelation of mercy. He took compaſſion on him, and provided for his ſalvation, by the covenant of grace, which is a covenant of promiſes. Such is the exalted grace of God, that he has made a free promiſe of deliverance from all the miſeries of ſin, and that convinced ſinners might be enabled to rely upon the promiſe, and to find comfort in it, God revealed it in his word, which cannot be broken. There it is written and entered upon record; and what he has there engaged to beſtow upon believers, ſhall be made good to them for ever and ever. To them he will freely give without money and without price, both in time and in eternity, all the bleſſings which are the fruit of the obedience and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt. To them he gives freely what coſt him an infinite ſum. The merit of all that he did and ſuffered is made theirs by faith, and faith is one of the bleſſings which he obtained among the reſt; for it is one of his precious gifts which he beſtows upon his

people

people by the operation of his good Spirit, who works with, and animates the incorruptible ſeed of the word, rendering it the means of forming faith in their hearts. The word of promiſe begets faith in them, by the holy Spirit's enabling them firſt to rely upon it, and afterwards to experience its ſweetneſs and richneſs, and then they know the truth of the fore-mentioned definition, namely, that a promiſe is an act of God's free grace, whereby he has engaged, in his word, to beſtow upon believers, all the bleſſings which come to them through the obedience and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt.

Now ſince this is the nature of the promiſes, there is but one point to be cleared up, and it is this—What ſecurity has God given for the fulfilling of the promiſes? The Lord knew what power unbelief had over careleſs ſinners, and how hard it was to bring convinced ſinners to believe, and how believers would be tempted by their remaining corruptions to entertain doubts and fears, and therefore he provided the moſt full and perfect evidence, that the caſe will admit of.

Firſt, Every promiſe ſtands confirmed in his revealed word, which word is the mind and will of God made known to his creatures, and which is therefore as perfect and unchangeable as God himſelf is. His word cannot be broken. It is impoſſible to break it. What weapons would you

you uſe? Force of arms? What force can you uſe againſt the almighty God? His mind cannot alter or change, and thereby ſuffer his word to be broken: for with God there is no variableneſs or ſhadow of turning. And ſince nothing from without, and nothing from within can cauſe any variableneſs in him, his word therefore will ſtand faſt for ever and ever. God is not a man, that he ſhould lye, neither the ſon of man, that he ſhould repent: hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? Or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good? What ſhould hinder him? Is not his hand almighty to fulfil what he hath ſpoken with his mouth? Here then is ſafe ground for faith to ſtand upon. You can rely upon one another's word. When a man has a fair character, and is known to be of good principles, you can truſt him, and you have a ſaying among yourſelves, That an honeſt man's word is as good as his bond. And may you not give better credit to God's word? For what ſuſpicion can you entertain of its ever being broken? He, who is truth itſelf, has ſaid, "Heaven and "earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not "paſs away;" they ſhall not paſs away, becauſe my almighty power ſhall eſtabliſh them in time and in eternity. And is there not then ſufficient reaſon to rely upon thoſe words which God declares ſhall not paſs away? And is there not abundant evidence to encourage the convinced

ſinner

ſinner to truſt to that word of promiſe, which can never fail, but ſhall ſtand faſt, when heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, and the place of them ſhall no more be found? Even then, when all things elſe fail, the promiſes will be receiving their full completion. Surely then the word of God, which cannot be broken, is a good ſecurity for our relying upon the promiſes.

But ſecondly, God, who knoweth our hearts, out of tender compaſſion to our infirmities, has been graciouſly pleaſed to confirm his promiſes, not only by his word, but alſo by his oath. The oath was the obligation which the perſons of the ever-bleſſed Trinity entered into to fulfil their diſtinct parts and offices in the covenant of grace, and they entered into this obligation for the ſake of thoſe who ſhould flee to Chriſt for refuge, that they might ſee the immutability of God's counſel to ſave them: becauſe he had confirmed it by an oath, and had thereby given them two immutable things to rely upon. The Apoſtle has reaſoned thus upon the ſubject. "When God made promiſe to Abraham, be-
"cauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware
"by himſelf; for men verily ſwear by the
"greater; and an oath, for confirmation, is to
"them an end of all ſtrife. Wherein God
"willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the
"heirs of promiſe the immutability of his
"counſel confirmed it by an oath, that, by two

"immutable

"immutable things, in which it was impoſſible
"for God to lye, we might have a ſtrong con-
"ſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold
"of the hope ſet before us." In which words we have a clear account of the nature of the oath, "God ſware by himſelf," and of the perſons for whoſe ſakes he ſware, namely, the heirs of promiſe, and the deſign of his ſwearing, namely, to put an end to all ſtrife in their conſciences concerning his faithfulneſs to fulfil his promiſes to them. And the Apoſtle's argument ſtands thus: when there is any diſpute or ſtrife among men, and the matter comes to be tried in a court of juſtice, the cauſe is finally determined, by examining the parties and their witneſſes upon oath. And there being a ſtrife between God and ſinners, on his part he proclaims his grace, promiſing them full pardon, if they ſeek it through Chriſt, binds himſelf to give it, by his word, and confirms his word by his oath. And ought not this oath for confirmation of the word of promiſe to put an end to all ſtrife in the ſinner's conſcience? For how can God's oath be broken? Here are two immutable things, which cannot poſſibly fail, the counſel of God to ſave the heirs of promiſe, and the oath of God to carry his counſel into execution. His counſel is what he decreed in the covenant of grace, when all his attributes determined to bring many ſons unto glory by Jeſus Chriſt. This divine

counſel

counſel revealed to his creatures in his word was ſufficient evidence, and ought to induce them to believe; but he was " willing more " abundantly," more than was needful, if they had not been very faithleſs and unbelieving, to convince them, and therefore confirmed his counſel by an oath; ſo that here are two immutable things in which it is impoſſible for God to lye, and which conſequently ought to make the faith of the heirs of promiſe immutable. The foundation upon which faith ſtands can never fail. It relies upon the unchangeable word of promiſe, and the promiſe is confirmed by the counſel of God, of which he ſays himſelf, " My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my " pleaſure. Iſaiah xlvi. 10. Yea, the counſel " of the Lord ſtandeth for ever, and the " thoughts of his heart to all generations." Pſal. xxxiii. 11. and the promiſe is alſo confirmed by the oath of God, which is immutable and cannot be broken. " The Lord hath ſworn, " and will not repent." He will not repent of his oath, unleſs he could ceaſe to be wiſe, or could be perjured, which to ſuppoſe poſſible, would be the higheſt blaſphemy. Oh! what full ſecurity then has a gracious God given to the heirs of promiſe? He would not have them to doubt of his love, or of his power to ſave them, and therefore he condeſcends to give them two immutable things for the ſupport of

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their faith: but knowing whereof they were made, and how ſlow of heart they were to believe, he has been pleaſed to exalt his free and ſovereign grace by giving them a

Third immutable thing, to enable them to rely ſtill more ſtedfaſtly upon his promiſes, and that is the unchangeable covenant. The ever-bleſſed Trinity, moved by mere love and rich mercy, contrived the gracious plan of the ſinner's redemption, and each perſon was to get himſelf glory by ſuſtaining a diſtinct office in the œconomy of the covenant. The Father was to glorify the truth, juſtice, and holineſs of the Godhead, by demanding full ſatisfaction for ſin. The Son covenanted to pay it, and to glorify the wiſdom and love of the Godhead by ſatisfying all the demands of law and juſtice. And the Holy Spirit was to glorify the power and grace of the Godhead by raiſing the dead in ſin to life, and quickening them together with Chriſt, and then enabling them to walk againſt all oppoſition in his ſteps and after his example, until they attain eternal life. This is the covenant of promiſe. And what could induce the holy Trinity to make it? What, but the divine love and mercy? And what can hinder the fulfilling of this covenant? Can any thing reſiſt and defeat the will of the Almighty? No. His power will carry his will into execution. But may not the will of God change? That is impoſſible. The covenant

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is everlaſting, and how then can it change? Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man diſannulleth or addeth thereto; and ſince a human covenant is not liable to change, certainly the everlaſting covenant is alike ordered in all things and ſure? For he that cannot lye, hath ſaid, "My covenant will I not "break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of "my mouth." Pſalm lxxxix. 34. It cannot be broken, it cannot alter, and how then can one tittle of it ever change or fail? All things elſe ſhall paſs away. "The mountains ſhall depart, and the hills "be removed; but my kindneſs ſhall not depart "from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my "peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath "mercy on thee." Iſaiah liv. 10.

This is the ſecurity which God hath vouchſafed to give for the fulfilling of his promiſes, and it is the moſt full and complete evidence, that any promiſe can have; and what then can the heirs of promiſe deſire more? Has not God been willing more abundantly to ſhew them the immutability of his counſel? For he has given them his word to rely upon, which cannot be broken, his oath, of which he will not repent, and his covenant, which he will not break or alter. It is impoſſible any of theſe ſecurities ſhould fail, and why then ſhould unbelieving doubts ariſe in their minds, and tempt them to think they could fail? My brethren, if you give

way

way to thoſe doubts, they will ſoon rob you of your peace and comfort: for although you be heirs to a great eſtate, yet it is chiefly in reverſion. You have very little in poſſeſſion at preſent, but the promiſes. You are heirs of promiſe, and if you loſe your reliance upon the promiſes, you loſe ſight of the evidence of your eſtate, and the comfortable hope of your inheriting it. Oh! remember then how diſhonourable this is to God, after he has provided ſuch immutable things for faith and hope to reſt upon, and how hurtful this is to your own intereſt, and therefore whenever doubts and fears begin to tempt you, aſk yourſelf, "What am I going to do? "Shall I fancy, that God can lye, or be perjured, "or be a covenant-breaker? Would not this be "blaſpheming his word, and his oath, and his "covenant? O Lord, keep thy ſervant from "this great wickedneſs, and ſtrengthen my faith, "that it fail not." And if you thus go to the throne of grace for help, you ſhall find it in time of need. God will enable you not to ſtagger at his promiſes through unbelief, but will make you ſtrong in faith, relying ſtedfaſtly upon his fulfilling them all to your ſouls.

Some perſons perhaps may be thinking, "God "has provided full and complete evidence for "the certainty of his fulfilling his promiſes, and "I think I could reſt upon this ſecurity, if I did

" but know that I was an heir of promiſe." Rely upon the promiſe, and it is yours. Live upon it, and you are undoubtedly an heir of promiſe. But this point comes to be more particularly conſidered under the ſcripture character of the perſons to whom the promiſes belong, which is the

Second general head of diſcourſe. When our Lord gave his apoſtles a commiſſion to preach, it was in theſe words, " Go ye into all the world, " and preach the goſpel to every creature." The goſpel brings the glad tidings of the covenant of promiſe made in Chriſt, and full ſecurity for all the promiſed bleſſings of the covenant. You have the gracious call this day. In my maſter's name I ſtand up, and invite every unpardoned ſinner to come and receive of him free mercy and forgiveneſs. " And the Spirit and " the bride ſay, Come, and let him that heareth " ſay, Come; and let him that is athirſt, Come." Ho! every one that thirſteth for redemption in the blood of Chriſt, even the forgiveneſs of ſins, come to the blood of ſprinkling, that you may be made clean from all your ſins. And if you find it in your hearts to accept of this free invitation, let not the ſenſe of your unworthineſs keep you back. Jeſus is able to ſave you, be ye ever ſo unworthy; for he can ſave to the uttermoſt. All is finiſhed on his part. He is able; he is alſo willing; and he engages to uſe his al-

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mighty power for you, if you aſk it. He freely calls you, without money and without price, to take pardon, righteouſneſs, holineſs, glory. He promiſes them in his word, binds it by oath, and confirms it by covenant. All he has of bleſſedneſs and glory to give his people ſhall be yours, if you will accept his call, and rely upon his promiſe.

But you are thinking ſtill with yourſelves, the promiſes are indeed freely offered to all, but they belong to none, except to the heirs of promiſe. That is very true; and therefore it concerns you to be aſſured, that you are an heir of promiſe. Do you deſire to be ſo; Would you willingly be an heir to the unſearchable riches of grace and glory? Oh! ſay you, from my heart I deſire it: What would not I give to know that the exceeding great and precious promiſes in ſcripture belong to me. But how came this deſire into your heart? Was it from any uneaſineſs in your mind about your ſins? Have you been awakened to ſee that all the threatenings of the law belong to you, and that you have an intereſt in none of the promiſes of the goſpel, and was it from hence that you waited upon God for mercy, deſiring to experience his promiſed grace and ſalvation? And are you now waiting, deeply humbled under a ſenſe of your ſinfulneſs and helpleſſneſs? If this be your caſe, thus far you are right: for this is the firſt work of God's Spirit upon all the heirs

of promiſe. He begins with convincing them of ſin. They are lying in the ſame maſs of corruption with other men, under the law, under guilt for breaking it, ſubject to death and hell. The holy Spirit makes them ſenſible of their being in this ſtate, and apprehenſive of their danger, and puts them upon ſeeking deliverance. They ſeek, but cannot find, for want of faith. They hear and read in ſcripture of the love and power of Chriſt to ſave ſuch ſinners as they are, but they have no faith to rely upon the promiſes. This is not a comfortable ſtate, but it is the way to get comfort: for none will ever aſk faith of God, whoſe gift it is, until they know the want of it, and therefore the holy Spirit convinces all the heirs of promiſe, that they have no faith, and they find, that without faith they cannot take comfort in any of the precious promiſes: upon which they look up to him, who, by his mighty operation, is alone able to work faith in the heart. And let every one of you, who are thus waiting upon God, ſeek and you ſhall find. He that put the deſire into your heart will give you poſſeſſion of the bleſſing deſired. The Spirit of God will enable you to rely upon the word of promiſe, and to apply it to your own ſoul, and thereby he will ſpeak peace and comfort to your conſcience. And by acting faith thus upon the word, you will be brought to the knowledge of your union with Chriſt.

United

United to him by the bond of the Spirit on his part, and by faith on yours, you will be a member of his myſtical body, and will derive influence and nouriſhment from him for the growth of your ſpiritual life. And being thus one with Chriſt, and Chriſt with you, you will have an intereſt in all that he has. His grace ſhall be yours, his Spirit yours, and all his promiſes ſhall be yours; for all things ſhall be yours, whether the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come, all ſhall be yours; becauſe ye are Chriſt's.

This is the experience of every heir of promiſe. The Spirit of God has convinced him of his ſinfulneſs and of his miſery. He has been brought to ſee his loſt and helpleſs ſtate; and in his guilty conſcience he was ſelf-condemned, finding himſelf to be a child of wrath, and an inheritor of everlaſting torments. After the holy Spirit had thus humbled him, he diſcovered to him the excellency of the Lord Chriſt, the infinite dignity of his perſon, and the infinite perfection of his righteouſneſs; and then by the grace of the ſame good Spirit, he was led to rely upon Chriſt for ſalvation; and to truſt the word of promiſe, which engages to give free and full and eternal ſalvation to every one who believeth in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And after the holy Spirit has enabled the ſoul to believe, and to rely upon the word of God, he carries

carries on his work, until faith be grown exceedingly, even up to full aſſurance. This the ſcripture calls the ſeal of the Spirit, which he ſets upon all the heirs of promiſe. Sealing comes from believing, and is a freſh evidence in confirmation of it. "After that ye believed, "ſays the apoſtle, ye were ſealed with the Spirit "of promiſe." Firſt, he enables the ſoul to reſt upon the promiſe and to apply it in this manner —He that believeth ſhall be ſaved: I believe, therefore I ſhall be ſaved; and then he confirms this with his own teſtimony, and ſeals it to the heart; ſo that the ſealing is for the believer's aſſurance, and not for God's. The Lord knoweth them that are his. Their names are written in his book. He knoweth their weakneſs, and how to ſtrengthen them with might in the inner man. And when temptations are ſtrong, and trials great, then the holy Spirit commonly ſtrengthens faith with his inward witneſs. He honours faith with his own ſeal, bearing teſtimony with the believer's Spirit, that he is a child of God. Every child of God has this ſeal ſet upon him ſome time or other. When it is moſt for his advantage, and moſt for God's glory, then the Spirit gives him this earneſt of his inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion.

But perhaps ſome perſon may enquire, How ſhall I know that I am ſealed by the Spirit of God?

God? You may know it by theſe ſcripture marks. Firſt, have you been deeply convinced of ſin, and of Chriſt's power to ſave you from ſin? Have you been convinced of your damnable eſtate without faith, and have you been aſking faith of God? And has he enabled you to rely upon the word of promiſe, which offers you free and full ſalvation, and are you verily perſuaded that God cannot break his word to you, who are relying upon it? And have you been waiting for the ſeal of the Spirit, hoping he would give you the inward witneſs of your adoption? All this is right. This is the work of the holy Spirit, by which he puts his ſeal upon the heir of promiſe; and if this be your experience, you need not doubt but the witneſs is from heaven, when the Spirit of God beareth teſtimony with your ſpirits, that ye are the children of God: For, ſecondly, in the act of bearing witneſs with your ſpirits he will give ſufficient evidence, that it is his teſtimony, both for his own glory, and for the aſſurance of your faith. He comes to bear witneſs to a matter of fact, that there may be no more doubt concerning it in the court of the believer's conſcience. The fact is this—"Thou art now a child of God "through faith in Chriſt Jeſus." He ſeals this teſtimony upon the heart with his own ſeal, that it may be authentic and laſting, and then doubts and fears vaniſh, conſcience is aſſured that

that all enmity is now ſlain, and that God is a loving reconciled Father, upon which the ſoul is led out into acts of praiſe and thankfulneſs, and with a holy triumph can ſay, "My beloved is "mine, and I am is."

But ſome may think it is an eaſy matter to be deluded in this caſe. No, there will be no room for deluſion, if your experience by the teſtimony of the Spirit was ſuch as I have been mentioning, and if you attend, thirdly, to what follows after it. Does the witneſs abide? Is conſcience at peace? Is your heart grateful? Is your faith lively and active? Not perhaps in ſo high a degree, as when the Spirit did bear his teſtimony, but ſtill in ſome good degree. In this caſe there can be no deluſion; becauſe that which has thus drawn your heart up to God, did certainly come from God. If the ſeal had not been from the holy Spirit, how could this fruit of the Spirit have been produced? The impreſſion, which is left, demonſtrates that it was made by a divine hand; for when the holy Spirit ſeals the ſoul, he not only ſeals it for Chriſt's property, but he alſo ſtamps the image and likeneſs of Chriſt upon it, which appears outwardly by its love to Chriſt, and by the acts of love. The ſoul is in love with the perſon, and with the offices and excellencies of Chriſt, and evidences this love by its love to his life and to his example, following and preſſing cloſe after them,

them, and by its love to his graces, deſiring ſtrength from God ſo to walk even as Chriſt walked. This conſtant love to Chriſt, proves the ſoul to be ſealed by his Spirit, and the perſon thus ſealed to be an heir of promiſe: for now he lives by faith upon Chriſt, and believes that all the promiſes made in Chriſt ſhall be made good to him. He has the earneſt of their completion in his heart, and he has ſome of them fulfilled to him every day for a daily pledge of the perfect completion of the reſt.

This is the character of the heirs of promiſe: and if any of you are thinking with yourſelves, ſome part of this character is agreeable to our experience, but not the whole of it, and therefore we doubt, whether we are heirs of promiſe or not; you ſhould remember, that the heirs of promiſe grow up to this character by ſeveral ſteps and degrees, and if any part of it be yours, you ought to preſs on to the attainment of the other parts. The fathers in Chriſt were once babes in Chriſt. The Spirit begins his work with conviction of ſin, which is neceſſary to put the ſinner upon ſeeking the promiſed mercies of the goſpel. If you are ſeeking, that is another ſtep towards your reliance upon God's word, and believing him faithful to fulfil his promiſes to your ſoul. And if you can rely upon his word, you have advanced one ſtep farther towards the aſſurance of faith and the ſeal of the Spirit.

Spirit. So that if any part of this character be yours, doubt not but the reſt will be yours alſo, only preſs you on to the attainment of what is yet before. Let what has been done in you, encourage you to proceed. You have ſome evidences of your inheritance, endeavour to get more, looking up to him who has begun, and praying him to carry on his own work, and fear not but you ſhall be brought to know, that Chriſt is yours, and that all the promiſes made through him are yours alſo. And may this conſideration ſtir you up to preſs forward, that what you are ſeeking is of ineſtimable value, and the happy poſſeſſion of it will be eternal. When you are once heirs of promiſe, you will be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt, born to inherit the riches of grace, and the riches of glory. All the bleſſedneſs which God has promiſed to give his children in time and in eternity is yours. You are heirs to the exceeding great and precious promiſes, and this brings me to the

Third general head of diſcourſe, under which I was to treat of their exceeding greatneſs and preciouſneſs. They are great in quantity, containing the greateſt bleſſings, which God has to give; yea, exceeding great beyond all deſcription, and they are as good as great, they are exceeding precious, containing every thing truly valuable in earth or heaven. The greatneſs

of

of the promiſes might be proved from many conſiderations. I ſhall mention, at preſent, but three or four. And the

Firſt, is the ſtate from which the promiſes offer to ſave man. He is fallen into a moſt miſerable and helpleſs bondage, and to the worſt of enemies, and none but an almighty arm can deliver him. Before the promiſe is brought to him, he is a tranſgreſſor of the law, under the curſes of it, liable to be cut off every moment, and to ſuffer them in everlaſting torments. And when juſtice comes to inflict the curſes of the law upon him, what ſatisfaction can he make? What has he to plead, why ſentence ſhould not be immediately executed? He is ſilent. His mouth is ſtopped. He is ſelf-condemned, and owns the ſentence to be juſt, which aſſigns him over to the tormentors, to ſuffer with them the vengeance of eternal fire. This is the deſert of every ſon and daughter of fallen Adam. Sin has made them ſubject to all this miſery, and has left them totally helpleſs; they can no more ſave themſelves from the ſecond death than they can from the firſt. While the long-ſuffering of God bears with them in this mortal life he ſends them his promiſes; in which he offers to ſave them from guilt and miſery, to cleanſe them from the pollutions, and to heal them of the wounds of ſin. And are not theſe great promiſes, which engage to ſee ſuch an almighty work

work performed? Surely they are exceeding great, ſince it requires the arm of the Lord God omnipotent to fulfil them by ſaving poor, guilty, helpleſs man from ſin and ſatan, from death and hell. Muſt not that be an exceeding great promiſe, which engages to ſave man from exceeding great miſery? And this greatneſs appears evidently in the

2. Next place from what the promiſes offer to beſtow upon the ſinner. They not only engage to ſave him from all evil, but alſo to beſtow upon him all good. They offer him a free pardon, that his ſins may be forgiven, and he may be juſtified by faith, and reconciled to God, and may have the love of God ſhed abroad in his heart, and may walk as an adopted ſon of God, worthy of his high calling unto all well-pleaſing. And in this holy walking heavenwards, the Lord promiſes him every grace and bleſſing which ſhall be needful for him, yea, he has engaged to make all things, ſickneſs, reproach, perſecution, trials, and troubles of every kind, work together for his good. Are not theſe great promiſes, which engage to beſtow pardon, juſtification, peace with God, adoption, ſanctification, and grace to profit under every diſpenſation of providence; yea, are not theſe exceeding great promiſes, which beſtow upon the ſinner ſuch exceeding great bleſſings? And beſtow them upon him.

3. Upon

3. Upon the greateſt motive, that poſſibly can be, even the free grace of God. Deliverance from the evils of ſin, and the beſtowing of the bleſſings of ſalvation, is all of grace, proceeding wholly from the unmerited love and mercy of God. He is the ſovereign Lord of heaven and earth. All creatures are his, bound to obey his holy will, and in caſe of diſobedience, bound to ſuffer the threatened puniſhment; and when man had diſobeyed, he had a right to nothing but puniſhment, and if it was remitted, yea, but for a day, this was an act of grace; but how much greater an act was it to pardon the ſinner, to put honour upon him, and to reſtore him to a better ſtate than he was in before he fell. If a friend beſtow upon you a free gift, you acknowledge yourſelves to be under a greater obligation, than if he was to pay you the ſame ſum for a juſt debt. How much then are you indebted to God? For he had no motive, but mere love, to induce him to make you any promiſe. Conſider this motive, conſider the promiſes, conſider from what a ſtate of miſery, to what a ſtate of happineſs God offers to raiſe you, and then admire and praiſe the greatneſs of that love, which led God to make you ſuch great promiſes. Well might the apoſtle call upon us to behold what manner of love it is: for it paſſeth knowledge, it is ſo exceeding great The bleſſings which his free grace has promiſed,

ſurpaſs

ſurpaſs all underſtanding. Even the ſouls of juſt men made perfect, who are now inheriting the promiſes, cannot adequately ſet forth the greatneſs of them: for they are eternal. And this is another

4. Conſideration, which exalts the greatneſs of the promiſes. They are of everlaſting duration, and can never fail. When nature itſelf ſhall be diſſolved, and heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, then the promiſes ſhall be eſtabliſhed. Not a tittle of them ſhall ſuffer in the univerſal conflagration; but they ſhall be then in their full extent moſt glorioufly fulfilled. Many of them are reſerved for the wonders of that great day. The raiſing of the body, free from corruption and mortality, admitting it to the viſion of God, putting upon it and the ſoul never-fading glory, a crown of righteouſneſs, and palms of victory; and then bringing them to drink of thoſe rivers of pleaſure which are at God's right hand for evermore, theſe are ſome of the exceeding great promiſes, which are to be completed at the Lord's coming to judgment. In that day the redeemed of the Lord will find that his divine power will fulfil the greateſt of his promiſes. When the captain of their ſalvation has brought them to the heavenly Canaan, the promiſed land of everlaſting reſt, then he will put them into the actual poſſeſſion of all the promiſes. Like as Joſhua, when he had brought the

the people into the promiſed land, called upon them to be witneſſes for God, that every promiſe had been fulfilled to them, ſo may our almighty Joſhua ſay to his redeemed people in the ſame words, "Ye know in all your "hearts and in all your ſouls, that not one "thing hath failed of all the good things, "which the Lord your God ſpake concerning "you; all are come to paſs unto you, and "not one thing hath failed thereof." Joſhua "xxiii. 14.

Let theſe conſiderations ſuffice to ſet forth the greatneſs of the promiſes. They are exceeding great in offering to deliver us from all evil, and to beſtow upon us all good; the motive for doing this is the infinite love and ſovereign grace of God, which advances the greatneſs of the promiſe by the freeneſs of it, and ſtill further advances it by what grace has promiſed to do for us in glory, even to give us the actual poſſeſſion and eternal enjoyment of all the promiſes.

And are theſe things ſo? If they be, who then would not wiſh to be an heir of promiſe? Are the promiſes thus exceeding great? Why then do they not appear ſo to every one of us? What is the reaſon that the generality of men had rather be heirs to any other eſtate, than to the promiſes? The text tells us the true cauſe; They know not the precioufneſs of them. They are

exceeding great in themſelves, but they are not apprehended to be ſo without faith. As the Apoſtle ſays of Chriſt, "to them that believe, "he is precious," ſo we may ſay of the promiſes, to them that believe they are precious, and therefore their greatneſs does not ſtrike any man, until he by faith taſtes ſomething of their preciouſneſs. Chriſt is the ſum and ſubſtance of all the promiſes. Chriſt himſelf is the firſt promiſe, and all the reſt are branches from that radical promiſe. They are all made in Chriſt, and in him they are all completed. God has no good to give to ſinners, but in relation to Chriſt, and all the promiſes of good are made in him, in conſequence of his meritorious life and death, his reſurrection and aſcenſion, yea, the ſpirit of promiſe is given as the bleſſed fruit of Chriſt's interceſſion. Now no man ſees any thing precious in Chriſt without faith; ſo neither without it does he ſee any thing precious in the promiſes. Chriſt has no form or comelineſs, that he ſhould deſire him, and the promiſes have no ſuch charms as to perſuade him to live upon them. But faith gives a ſubſtance, a ſubſtantial preſence to the things hoped for in the promiſes, and gives evidence of the believer's intereſt in the things not ſeen by the bodily eyes, and thus it enables the ſoul to experience the reality, and to find ſomething of the value of the good things contained in the promiſes.

Perhaps

Perhaps you may be convinced of the neceſſity of faith to diſcover the precioufneſs of the promiſes, but you do not clearly underſtand, how faith acts upon them when it firſt diſcovers and afterwards lives upon their precioufneſs. The word of promiſe is the eſtabliſhed means in the hand of the Spirit of begetting faith, and of ſtrengthening it: for a ſinner can expect no good from God, unleſs he vouchſafe to give him a free promiſe. The ſcripture is a revelation of God's will, in which he engages, for Chriſt's ſake, to beſtow graces and bleſſings upon his children; but the unawakened ſinner ſees no want of thoſe graces and bleſſings, until the holy Spirit convince him of ſin, ſtir up guilt in his conſcience, and make him ſenſible of his danger. Then he is glad to hear of a promiſe, and is aſking, Who will ſhew me any good? The Lord God ſends him the goſpel with a free title to all good, and out of his infinite grace to enrich him with the unſearchable riches of Chriſt. The holy Spirit enables him to receive the goſpel, and to rely and to act faith upon the word of promiſe. Faith looks at the word, ſees what God has promiſed therein, reſts and ſtays upon him for the fulfilling of it, and by this dependence and reliance upon the word of promiſe, the believer calls upon and engages the divine power to fulfil it. And the fulfilling of it gives it a peculiar ſweetneſs and precioufneſs to the believer's ſoul.

Every freſh proof of God's faithfulneſs to fulfil it ſtrengthens the believer's reliance and dependence upon it, and thereby it grows more precious to all the faculties of his ſoul. The underſtanding ſees and acknowledges the promiſes to be important realities, the will chooſes them for its inheritance, and the affections love them and live upon them. Thus they become more and more precious. Tried promiſes are precious promiſes. Every time the believer goes boldly to the throne of grace, and aſks, through Chriſt, the fulfilling of any promiſe, and receives it, then his faith grows, and as his faith grows exceedingly, ſo the promiſes grow exceedingly precious.

But all our experience here, is only an earneſt and foretaſte of their future precioufneſs. The chief part of them is to be fulfilled beyond the grave, and many of them at the laſt day, and even then there will be no adequate deſcription of their precioufneſs. The ſaints in glory will be able only to ſet forth half their praiſe, the promiſes being ſtill completing through the endleſs ages of eternity, ſo that it will require an eternity to ſhew forth all their praiſe. May it be your happineſs, my brethren, now to experience, by faith, the greatneſs and precioufneſs of the promiſes, and to have reaſon daily to praiſe him, in whom they are made, and by whom they will be all made good for ever and ever.

ever. Such are the promiſes. They are exceeding great and precious. They are certainly ſo in themſelves, but do they, my brethren, appear ſo to you at preſent? If they do not, conſider a little what your ſtate is before you are intereſted in the promiſes. You are tranſgreſſors of that law, which has decreed—"The ſoul that ſin-"neth it ſhall die." Under this ſentence you live, ſubject to whatever is meant by the ſoul's dying from God. You are liable to the wrath and juſtice of the Almighty, and to thoſe eternal torments, which he has threatened to inflict upon ſinners; and was it not for his long ſuffering, which of you would have been ſpared to this hour? And while the long-ſuffering of God is waiting, he ſends his miniſters with the glad tidings of the goſpel to call you to a free pardon. They invite you in Chriſt's name, and in Chriſt's words. They aſſure you of his readineſs to receive you into his favour, and to forgive, and to forget all your offences. For your encouragement they relate unto you his promiſes, which cannot be broken. They earneſtly preſs you to accept of them, and to be happy in the enjoyment of them. But in vain. Their meſſage is ineffectual. You had rather have the realities of ſin, than the earneſts of the promiſes. And what is this but abſolute infidelity? For if you knew what ſin is, and believed the divine promiſes to be ſo great and precious as they are,

you

you would certainly prefer them to the delights of ſin. Whereas you neither believe the word, nor the oath, nor the covenant of God; which is really practical Atheiſm: for you are without Chriſt, you are ſtrangers from the covenant of promiſe, you have no hope, and you are without God, Atheiſts in the world. You may not perhaps deny the being of God, but you live without Chriſt, and without God in the world; and therefore you are practical Atheiſts. While you are in this ſtate you cannot poſſibly have any true happineſs, not in time, becauſe your ſins are unpardoned, not in eternity, becauſe then you will receive the puniſhment of unpardoned ſin. And is this a true deſcription of your guilt and of your danger? You know it is, The word of God will not ſuffer you to doubt of it, unleſs you deny its authority. And how then do you determine to act? What! will you ſtill ſeek your happineſs in the ways of ſin? God forbid. Turn ye, turn ye unto the Lord; certainly he bids higher for your hearts, than Satan can. His promiſes are greater than ſin, or the world, can make: You know they are. And ſtill his promiſes follow you, although you have often turned a deaf ear to them. Once more I call and invite you in his name; oh that he would ſpeak to your hearts, and call effectually. My brethren, ye are ſinners, God offers you pardon. You are guilty, he offers you free juſtification.

He promiſes you his Son to be your Saviour, his Spirit to be your ſanctifier, his grace to be your ſtrength, his glory to be your eternal inheritance. He opens his treaſury, and invites you to come, and to receive freely of him unſearchable and ineſtimable riches. Come then at the invitation of this gracious God, and hearken no longer to the lying promiſes of ſin. If the Lord has now put it into your hearts toſeek the fulfilling of the great things, which he has engaged to give his people; may he enable you to ſeek, until you find him faithful and juſt to fulfil all his promiſes.

2. There are many of you ſeeking and waiting for the fulfilling of them. You are convinced of the ſinfulneſs of your hearts and lives, and are humbled under a ſenſe of your vileneſs and helpleſſneſs, and you find the neceſſity of being ſaved from your ſins, but you cannot rely with ſuch confidence upon the word of God, as to believe that you ſhall be heirs of promiſe. But why not? To whom are the promiſes made? Are they not made to ſinners? And are they not diſcoveries of God's gracious intentions towards them in the Son of his love. And ſince you are ſinners, convinced of ſin, and waiting for mercy, ſurely the promiſes are made to you, and by relying on them they are yours.

But

But you are afraid to rely upon them. What! are you afraid God will break his promiſe? Conſider what has been before ſaid of the ſecurity, which God has vouchſafed to give you, in order to ſilence your doubts and fears, and to put an end to all ſtrife in your conſciences. He has given you his word, and his oath, and his covenant. Theſe are immutable things; and why then ſhould you fear to rely upon thoſe things, which cannot poſſibly change or fail?

Perhaps you believe, that the promiſes are immutable, and yet you are afraid to rely upon them, becauſe of the greatneſs of your ſins. The greatneſs of your ſins ſhould humble you, but not drive you to deſpair: for are there not great promiſes for great ſinners, yea exceeding great promiſes for exceeding great ſinners? Is it not written, "Come now, and let us reaſon "together, ſaith the Lord, though your ſins be as "ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though "they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as "wool?"

But ſtill you are afraid to rely upon the promiſes, becauſe you have got ſuch a wicked heart: You think there is not any perſon in the world, whoſe heart is ſo wholly ſet in them to do evil, as yours is. Be it deſperately wicked, yet can you deſire God to create in you a clean heart,

and

and to renew a right ſpirit within you? If you can, then hear what he has promiſed, "A new heart "alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I "put within you."

Why then do you ſtagger at the promiſes of God through unbelief? Are you complaining of your corruptions, and are they ſo many and ſtrong, that they tempt you to think there is no mercy for you? Bring them to the blood of ſprinkling, and when you are cleanſed from the guilt of ſin, the Lord has promiſed that his grace ſhall be ſufficient for you, and that ſin ſhall not have dominion over you. Your corruptions, be they ever ſo many, or ever ſo ſtrong, ſhall be ſubdued by his almighty grace.

What then ſtill hinders you from relying on God's promiſes? Can they ever fail? No. On God's part all is fixed and immutable, and whatever it be on your part which makes you ſtagger at the promiſes, has itſelf a promiſe, that you ſhall be delivered from it, which renders your unbelief more inexcuſable. Whatever ſin it be, or guilt, or corruption, or miſery, the Lord has promiſed you ſalvation from it. He will redeem you from all evil; from all the evil of ſin, and from all the evil of puniſhment. He has given his word, and his word cannot be broken. And why then cannot you rely upon it, eſpecially ſince God has promiſed to deliver you from that very thing which hinders your reliance upon his word?

word? Is this indeed the caſe? And are you convinced of it? Why then do you make God a lyar, by not believing the record which he hath given of his Son? Oh! beg of him to enable you to give glory to his word of promiſe by relying upon it, and by ſetting to your ſeal, that God is true, and then God will ſet to his ſeal, and the Spirit of promiſe will ſeal you to the day of redemption.

3. Bleſſed be his rich grace and love, who is daily fulfilling his promiſes. Many of you have had happy experience of his faithfulneſs to fulfil them. You ought always to remember, my chriſtian friends and brethren, that whatever you enjoy of grace, or hope for in glory, is freely promiſed and freely given you in Jeſus Chriſt; and let your gratitude bear ſome proportion to his mercies. He has opened the treaſury of his promiſes, and has put you in poſſeſſion of his unſearchable riches. Oh what manner of love is this! that he ſhould raiſe you from the loweſt beggary, to ſuch an exceeding great and precious inheritance. Every promiſe made to you in this life is a bank-note of heaven, and when you go to the throne of grace to demand the payment of it, he cannot ſend you away with a denial. If you plead the promiſe, and deſire the fulfilling of it in the name of your Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, he cannot deny the word that is gone out of his mouth. His divine power will give you all

all things that pertain to life and godlineſs. For when he gave you Chriſt, with him he gave you all things. In Chriſt there is all that you can want treaſured up for you: for it pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell. There is a fulneſs of wiſdom to teach you the true nature of the promiſes, and a fulneſs of ſalvation to deliver you from every thing that hindered your relying upon them, and a fulneſs of power to put you into the eternal poſſeſſion of them all. Having then theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us live upon them, and we ſhall thereby live to his glory, in whom they are all made. Let us beg of him to act as our prophet, for the enlightening of our underſtandings, that we may ſee the great promiſes made through him, and as our prieſt to pardon and to forgive us our ſins, that we may have by faith the earneſt of our inheriting the promiſes, and as our king to rule in us and over us, until he bring us ſafe to the promiſed inheritance. In theſe three offices, Chriſt has engaged to act for his people here below. He was to be their wiſdom, their righteouſneſs, and their ſanctification, and they find him faithful to fulfil his offices, and to perform his promiſes. And this experience keeps their minds ſtayed upon him for the performance of what remains as yet unaccompliſhed. They have no reaſon to doubt of his love: for they continually find his power exerted in their behalf.

Happy men, who have the Lord for their God, a faithful promiſe-keeping God, who will be their God for ever and ever. His covenant mercies ſhall never fail. They ſhall be receiving their perfect accompliſhment hereafter, when time ſhall be no more. May he, in whom they are all made, and in whom they are all eſtabliſhed, now get himſelf glory by enabling every one of us to rely upon his promiſes, and may we at this time find the promiſe, which he has made to us while we are here gathered together, fulfilled to us all. He has ſaid, "Wherever two "or three are met together in my name, there "am I in the midſt of you." Oh that we may all find his ſpiritual preſence. If there be any poor deluded worldlings here, who had rather have the poſſeſſion of this world's goods, than the riches of the promiſes, may the Lord convince them this day of their guilt and of their danger, and put them upon ſeeking the promiſed mercies of the goſpel. And may he be graciouſly pleaſed to vouchſafe his preſence to thoſe who are ſeeking him, that they may no more by their unbelief diſhonour his word, and his oath, and his covenant. Put an end, bleſſed Lord, to all ſtrife in their conſciences, that they may no longer ſtagger at thy promiſes. Enable them to believe to the ſaving of their ſouls, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt may be given to them that believe. And accept of thanks and praiſes from thy redeemed people. Oh! make us more

thankful for thy great and precious promiſes, and for faith to apply them, and to live upon them. May they grow more precious to us every day. Fulfil, Lord Jeſus, what remains, that we may be receiving continually out of thy fulneſs, ſtrength of faith, increaſe of grace, power over ſin, and may at laſt be more than conquerors, through him that loved us. Hear us, for we aſk thoſe things according to thy promiſe, and grant us them for thy great name's ſake, to the honour of the Father and of the eternal Spirit, the holy, bleſſed and glorious Trinity in one Jehovah, to whom be equal honour and glory, and bleſſing and praiſe, in earth and heaven, in time and in eternity. *Amen* and *Amen.*

THE END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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